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Analysis for Policy

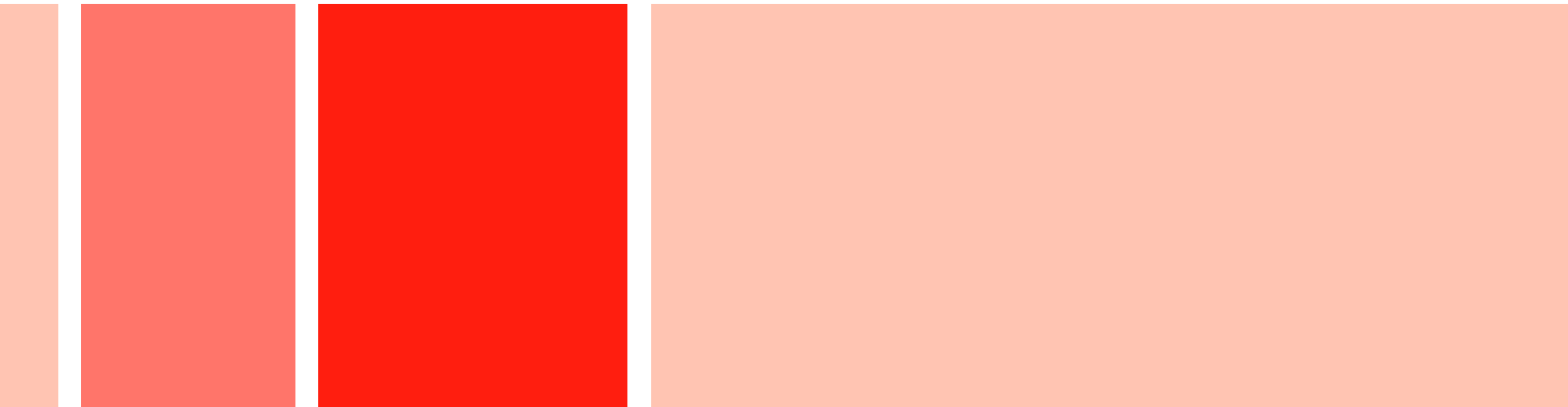


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Evaluation of the National Youth Service Strategy for Wales



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Arad Research

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Assembly Government

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Executive summary

1. This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the National Youth Service Strategy for Wales: Young People, youth work, Youth Service (the Strategy) commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government and undertaken by Arad Research. The evaluation took place between October 2009 and July 2010 with the aims of evaluating the effectiveness of the Strategy in achieving goals set out by the Welsh Assembly Government; and identifying its impacts across Wales.
2. The Strategy was launched in March 2007, providing a vision for youth work in Wales and its role in contributing to the Assembly's policy agendas. It included an action plan to support a more integrated and coordinated approach to the delivery of youth work across Wales. It also sought to ensure that young people have a voice in shaping the youth work services provided for them and are able to influence wider policy developments that impact upon them.
3. The research involved reviewing key documents relating to the delivery of the strategy; collecting evidence from practitioners through a survey and qualitative interviews; further interviews with wider stakeholders and with higher education institutions; follow-up visits to six local areas to collect more in-depth qualitative evidence and discussions with young people during visits to maintained and voluntary sector youth clubs.

Resources for Youth Service provision

4. The total income for the maintained Youth Service in Wales increased during the lifetime of the Strategy, rising from £36.7m to £44.5m. This is, in part, due to additional funding tied to the delivery of the Strategy. Local authorities also benefitted from greater funding drawn from a range of additional

sources. There are, however, significant variations in budgets allocated for Youth Service provision by local authorities.

5. The additional investment served to increase the amount spent across Wales per young person. Spending increased from £63 per head in 2006-07 to £74 per head in 2008-09, an increase of 17.5%. Spending per young person, however, varies considerably across local authorities, ranging from £26 per head to £135 per head in 2008-09.
6. Many practitioners welcomed the opportunities presented as a result of the additional funding linked to the Strategy. Senior managers noted that additional capital and revenue funding made available had an impact, leading to the introduction of new services for young people.
7. Some youth workers consider that variations in spending lead to inequalities in terms of the quality and range of opportunities for young people. A lack of funding remains the key challenge facing organisations delivering services to young people, with budgets likely to come under increased pressure in coming years.
8. There is scope for local authorities to increase the funding allocated to Youth Service budgets to better reflect funding amounts set out in the core Welsh Assembly Government grant . Some practitioners suggest that this may be more likely if local Youth Services were required to work towards common national standards.

Integrated policy development and delivery

9. The National Youth Service Strategy aimed to establish a new integrated structure, linking national, regional and local policy making and delivery. The structures put in place since the publication of the Strategy pave the way for a more integrated approach to planning Youth Services, with greater opportunities for regional collaboration at all levels.

10. The regional partnerships for both Principal Youth Officers (PYOs) and the voluntary sector are important developments that are consistent with the regionalisation agenda set out in Making the Connections. These partnerships are providing strategic direction for the delivery of activities and actions set out in the Strategy; they have led to greater cross-authority training for youth workers and, in some cases, they are being used as forums to share effective practice.
11. The impact of the regional groups has been seen in a number of ways: one group's work informed the development of the National Workforce Development Strategy; another group helped develop national standards for the Youth Service in Wales.
12. A number of elements within this integrated structure existed either informally or in another guise prior to the publication of the National Strategy. However the Strategy did provide renewed impetus that has helped formalise and strengthen a collaborative and partnership-based approach to the delivery of services.

Workforce development

13. The objective set out in the Strategy to develop and introduce a National Workforce Development Plan for the Youth Service has been achieved, however this was a slower process than originally anticipated. The development of a manifesto for the youth work workforce in Wales, along with the roll out of the Workforce Development plan promises to deliver a more coordinated approach, with an emphasis on regional planning.
14. PYOs consider that progress is being made in improving the skills and qualifications of the youth workforce, but that this is a medium to long term objective. In recent years, the proportion of the workforce holding Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) professional qualifications has fluctuated, however it remains far below the target included in the National Youth Service Strategy.

15. Evidence collected from practitioners as part of the evaluation indicates that training opportunities are increasing. The challenge is to ensure that the training delivered reflects the priorities and vision set out in the National Strategy.

Voluntary sector actions

16. Structures are in place, both through the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWWYS) and the regional voluntary sector consortia, to ensure that the vision and priorities set out in the National Strategy can permeate down to organisational and delivery levels in the voluntary sector Youth Service. However the Strategy remains a peripheral issue for many of the smaller voluntary sector organisations.

17. The newly established regional voluntary consortia have an important role to play in the strategic direction and management of Youth Service activities in the voluntary sector. They are an opportunity to bring together appropriate partners to work with the regional PYO groups and with regional Welsh Assembly Government officials to help inform national policy and share effective practice.

18. Youth workers consider that collaboration between the voluntary and statutory sector has become more effective during the past three years. Relatively few, however, attribute this directly to the Strategy, noting that there are many reasons why voluntary and statutory organisations work increasingly closely together to delivery services to young people.

Ensuring quality and measuring impact

19. The Youth Service uses a range of tools to demonstrate the impact of youth work on young people. In some cases, the approaches adopted pre-date the Strategy, while other local authorities have introduced new systems during

recent years. Many practitioners have been involved in the piloting of Demonstrating Success¹.

20. Practitioners and youth service managers support the move towards agreeing and implementing national standards for youth work. Robust management information systems (MIS) are required to ensure the effective roll out of the standards. Local authorities have improved their MIS, with some having invested in new systems with funding allocated under the Strategy.
21. The vast majority are now using robust MIS, which will contribute to better planning and benchmarking of performance and provision. It is important that there is compatibility between the different systems in use, to ensure that the data being collected is fit for purpose, particularly with the prospect of common national standards coming into use.

Structure and organisation of local provision

22. Local authorities have reviewed the structure and organisation of Youth Service provision during the lifetime of the National Strategy. Youth workers reported that opportunities for young people to take part in activities have been extended, with a particular focus on greater outreach and detached provision. The Youth Service carries out assessments of need systematically and the information collected informs the way in which provision is planned and delivered.
23. Increasingly, local authorities are producing local Youth Service strategies which provide a robust local framework for the delivery of the Youth Service and, in many cases, reflect overarching national objectives and priorities.
24. Young people generally recognise that there is now greater choice of provision and better opportunities to engage in the Youth Service. However,

¹ Demonstrating Success is a new approach to measuring the progress and outcomes of children and young people in Wales being developed by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Demonstrating Success project is developing a set of indicators, tools and guidelines to measure the achievements and progress of young people in a range of settings, capturing changes in their social and emotional dispositions and skills (SEDS). For more information, see <http://demonstratingsuccess.co.uk/>

some remain frustrated about the lack of local provision and the quality of facilities.

25. Isolating the impact of the Strategy on the structure and organisation of Youth Service is difficult: a number of local authorities reported that reviews and reorganisations had been 'in the pipeline' prior to the Strategy's publication. As such, the Strategy confirmed what was already in progress and was not a catalyst for change. Other PYOs valued the guidance provided by the Strategy as they led internal reviews of provision.

Young people's engagement in decision making

26. The National Youth Service Strategy charged the Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities and the voluntary sector with playing a leading role in engaging young people in making decisions, planning and reviewing actions on all matters that affect them. Principal Youth Officers report that they 'routinely' and 'systematically' consult with young people and involve them in the planning of services delivered to them. Processes to ensure the involvement of young people in decision making are built into local Youth Service strategies in many areas.

27. A majority of practitioners surveyed during the evaluation noted that young people are involved in decisions that affect them. This was supported by young people themselves who feel that they are able to play a role in decisions about services delivered locally and that their views are taken into account. This participative approach, many examples of which were provided, is planned at a strategic level and filters down to individual projects and youth centres.

28. Less clear is the extent to which such activities are directly attributable to the Strategy. In some local authority areas, the actions linked to promoting the participation of young people were set out in plans that pre-date the Strategy. In other local authority areas, PYOs and youth workers noted that the Strategy underlined the importance of processes that were already in place.

Youth work training in higher education (HE)

29. A range of professional courses in youth and community work are provided at five higher education institutions in Wales. Across the HE sector in Wales, there are over 600 people enrolled on youth and community work courses. Many of these students are funded by the Youth Service (through grant funding provided by the Welsh Assembly Government).
30. Institutions reported healthy increases in numbers applying for, and enrolling on, youth and community work courses during the past three years. One institution noted that numbers for the current academic year were more than double those at the time when the Strategy was published. Other institutions had also seen sustained increases in take up. The introduction of degree level professional qualifications from September 2010 may result in yet greater levels of interest.
31. Institutions have reviewed and restructured courses, working with employers to try and ensure that the programmes delivered meet their needs. The evaluation found examples of good joint working between higher education institutions (HEIs) and Principal Youth Officers. HEIs have also expanded the number of places available for youth work training, reflecting growing demand for professional qualifications.
32. However there remain concerns about the quality of links between HEIs and PYOs and whether current programmes are succeeding in producing the high quality graduates required to deliver the vision and goals set out in the National Strategy. Some youth work students felt that their programmes of study would benefit from more practical dimensions. Work placements do provide youth work students with important opportunities to gain valuable practical experience. However, it appears that the quality of placements is variable.

Broad conclusions

33. Evidence indicates that Youth Service provision has been enhanced during the lifetime of the Strategy. Youth workers reported that opportunities for

young people to take part in activities have been extended, with a particular focus on greater outreach and detached provision. It is, nevertheless, unclear to what extent these improvements can be attributed to the specific actions included in the Strategy. Practitioners noted that many developments were planned or underway prior to the Strategy's publication. Others, however, appreciated that the Strategy provided a broad framework or direction for the ongoing development of the Youth Service in Wales.

34. The Strategy is seen to have been effective in providing a broad strategic framework for the ongoing development of the Youth Service. The strategic vision included in the *Young people, youth work, Youth Service* is something that organisations across the statutory and voluntary sector appear to have bought into, based on the findings of this evaluation.

Recommendations

35. Based on these findings, the report makes a series of eighteen recommendations which focus on a range of issues. These include the need to:

- Develop and introduce new national standards for youth work to accompany a revised National Strategy;
- Reduce the local variations in spending per head for young people in order to promote equality of opportunity and provision;
- Develop local Youth Service strategies which reflect the national vision for the Youth Service and recognise the range of youth work methodologies that can be employed in different circumstances;
- Further strengthen regional structures to support planning and delivery;
- Increase the proportion of youth workers qualified to JNC Professional level qualification, including those in voluntary sector youth work;
- Share good practice in engaging young people in decision making at a local level;
- Ensure that HEIs deliver programmes that reflect the purpose, principles, values and outcomes identified in the revised Youth Service Strategy;

- Improve strategic links between HEIs and PYOs;
- Assess levels of demand for Welsh language provision and respond to identified need;
- Ensure robust management information systems are in place to collect data on take up, outcomes and progression following youth work activities.

1 Introduction to the Evaluation

Purpose of the report

- 1.1 Arad Research working with Pro-Mo Cymru was commissioned in October 2009 to carry out an evaluation of the National Youth Service Strategy for Wales, *Young People, youth work, Youth Service*.
- 1.2 This report presents the findings of the evaluation and includes conclusions and recommendations to help inform the future direction of the National Youth Service Strategy for Wales.

Aim, scope and objectives of the evaluation

- 1.3 This 'first stage evaluation to review the impact of the National Youth Service Strategy' took place towards the end of the strategy's 2007-2010 lifespan and, as such, both reflects on impacts and achievements during that period and looks ahead to the updated strategy and implementation plan.
- 1.4 The aims of the evaluation were defined in the tender document as being:
 - to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy to date in achieving goals set out in Welsh Assembly Government policies and strategies; and
 - to identify and consider the impacts of strategy delivery arrangements across Wales, local areas and regions, both for individuals and providers.
- 1.5 The objectives of this evaluation, as set out by the Welsh Assembly Government, were to:
 - assess the success of the strategy so far, in its aim of enhancing the ability of the Youth Service to deliver a wide range of informal and non-formal learning opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-25 which they choose to engage in;

- assess the success of the strategy in setting realistic strategic goals for all Youth Service partner organisations to achieve within an appropriate timescale;
- identify any barriers or constraints that have impeded the progress of the strategy to date;
- collect opinions on how best to support practitioners in recording evidence of the impact of strategy activities on the active participation, skills development and emotional competence of beneficiaries; and
- provide recommendations for possible future development of the Strategy and or the processes / activities within it; and
- develop an evaluation framework for future stages of the evaluation.

Text boxes throughout the report indicate the National Strategy actions to which evidence and commentary refers. See Appendix 1 for full list of actions

1.6 The aims and objectives of the evaluation were further discussed with the project steering group. Owing to delays in starting the project, the steering group agreed that the final objective – developing an evaluation framework for future stages of the evaluation – would not be carried forward and that the research team would deliver a full and final evaluation covering 2007-10.

Methodology

1.7 Following the guidelines in the original invitation to tender and a subsequent project inception meeting the methodology for undertaking the evaluation was based on a combination of desk research and fieldwork which included the following key tasks:

- Desk Research
- Fieldwork:
 - one-one consultations/discussions
 - group consultations/discussions with practitioners
 - group consultations/discussions with young people, and
 - practitioner survey.

The methodology is set out in greater detail in Appendix 1.

Policy context and background to the Youth Service Strategy

- 1.8 The Welsh Assembly Government launched the National Youth Service Strategy in March 2007 and the strategy outlined how the Assembly would work together with local authorities, the voluntary sector and Higher Education Institutions to provide high quality Youth Services. *Young people, youth work, Youth Service: National Youth Service Strategy for Wales*,
- provides a vision for youth work in Wales and its impact in contributing to the policy agendas of the Welsh Assembly Government;
 - sets out how to identify the staff, structure and resources required by the Youth Service in Wales to meet the needs of that vision; and
 - creates an action plan to enable youth work to make an effective contribution to Extending Entitlement and the wider policy aspirations of the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 1.9 The Strategy is both informed by, and set out to ensure greater coherence across, the existing vision of the Welsh Assembly Government as at 2007. The Minister's Foreword explains,
- It will make an important contribution to our overall vision "Children and Young People: Rights to Action" for 0-25 year old, "14-19 Learning Pathways" and specifically "Extending Entitlement" for 11-25 year olds (page i)
- 1.10 Nowhere is the vision of these policies more apparent than in the involvement of young people in decisions that affect them. Successive policy documents and strategies had underlined the importance of ensuring that young people have a voice in shaping the youth work services provided for them and are able to influence wider policy developments that impact upon them. Extending Entitlement (Welsh Assembly Government, 2000) made explicit the right for young people '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'. The National Youth Service Strategy was, therefore, informed by a number of developments that had

enshrined the importance of engaging young people in decision-making and planning processes.

Acknowledgements

1.11 We would like to place on record our thanks to all those who contributed their time and effort to this evaluation. All contributions – both the survey responses and during interviews with the evaluation team – were greatly appreciated and provided the team with a substantial body of evidence and information upon which to base this report.

Structure of the report

1.12 The report is structured in such a way as to reflect the themes and actions included in the National Strategy. Chapters 2-9 present evidence based on survey findings, interviews, focus groups and desk research to provide an overall assessment of progress against the National Strategy's key themes. These are:

- Resources for Youth Service provision (Chapter 2);
 - Integrated policy development and delivery (Chapter 3);
 - Workforce development (Chapter 4);
 - Voluntary sector (Chapter 5);
 - Quality and measuring impact in the Youth Service (Chapter 6);
 - Structure and organisation of local Youth Service provision (Chapter 7);
 - Young people's engagement in decision making (Chapter 8);
 - Youth work training in higher education (Chapter 9).
- Appendix 2 of this report provides a checklist of the actions included in the Strategy, referencing where in this report evidence against these actions can be found.

2 Resources for Youth Service provision

WAG 1

- 2.1 Prior to the publication of *Young People, youth work, Youth Service, the National Youth Service Strategy for Wales* (the Strategy) a Welsh Assembly Government consultation document² issued to stakeholders had outlined the uncertainties faced by the maintained Youth Service in terms of 'funding, staffing, equipment and buildings'. The document noted that the issues facing the voluntary sector were 'equally challenging' as a result of short term grant funding and insufficient training opportunities for workers.
- 2.2 Another issue that had been raised was the variation in funding for the Youth service across local authorities. It had been suggested that differences in the proportion of core budgets that is delegated to local Youth Services has a significant impact on the quality and range of provision.
- 2.3 Assessing what impact, if any, the Strategy has had on these issues was therefore a key focus of the evaluation. This section summarises evidence collected during the evaluation linked to resources and funding, including the specific aim of,
- increasing the resources available for high quality Youth Service provision which takes forward its vision in the maintained and voluntary sectors.

Youth Service funding: national data and local variations

- 2.4 In 2006-07, the year immediately preceding the publication of the National Youth Service Strategy, the total income of the maintained Youth Service in Wales was reported to be £36.7 million – made up of £23 million from the local authority core budget and a further £13.7 million from additional sources, including Cymorth and European funding. By 2008-09, two years into the delivery of the Strategy, total funding for the maintained Youth Service had increased to £44.5 million, consisting of £25.3 million through

² *Towards a National Youth Service Strategy for Wales* (November 2006), Welsh Assembly Government

the core budget and £19.2 million from other sources (including Cymorth, 14-19 Learning Pathways funding, and additional WAG Capital Grant funding).

- 2.5 Additional funding tied to the delivery of the Strategy was announced and forms part of these figures. The Welsh Assembly Government reported that new revenue funding totalling over £4.5 million was secured for three years from 2008/09. In addition, £3m each year in capital funding for Youth Services has been made available to local authorities to support improvements to facilities and the purchase of equipment.
- 2.6 The latest available data shows that over the past two years there has been a 21% increase in the total income for the Youth Service in Wales. Overall, the core Youth Service budget across Wales has increased by 10%. National data, however, conceals significant variations in budgetary trends at a local level: in 7 out of 22 local authorities the core budget for the Youth Service in 2008-09 was lower than in 2006-07, the year prior to the publication of the National Youth Service Strategy; meanwhile one large authority increased its core budget by over 60% during the same period.

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Table 1: Youth Service income – core budget and additional income 2006-07 to 2008-09

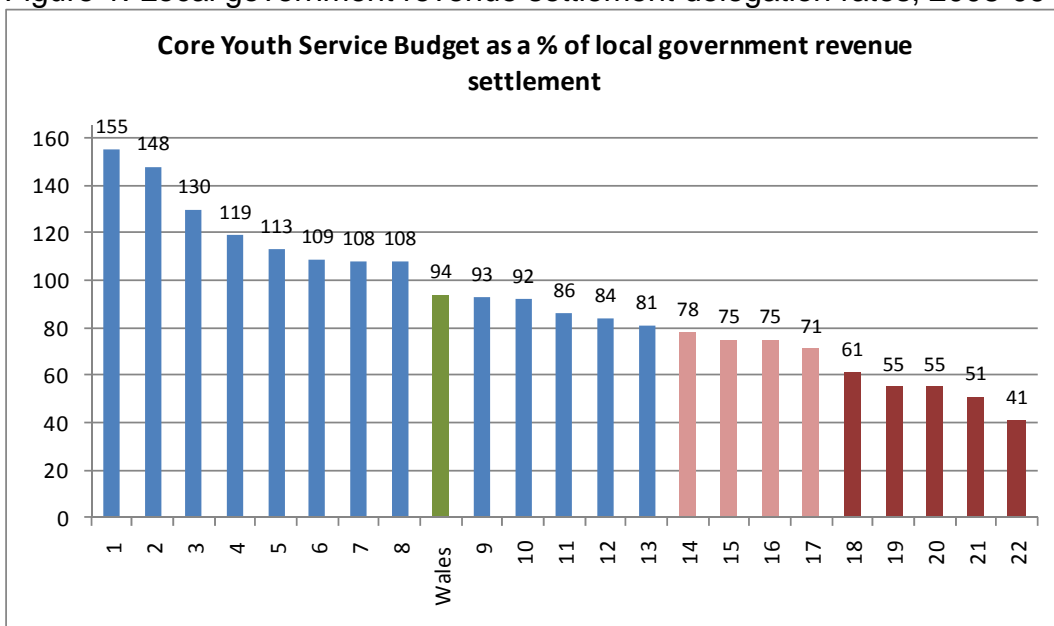
	Core Youth Service Budget (£m)	Additional funding (£m)	Principal sources of additional funding	TOTAL (£m)
2006-07	23.0	13.7	Cymorth (£5.9m); European funding (£1.2m); WAG funding (£1.4m)	36.7
2007-08	22.8	17.1	Cymorth (£6.4); European (£1.4); WAG funding (£2.6)	39.9
2008-09	25.3	19.2	Cymorth (£5.9); WAG Capital Grant (£3.0m); Learning Pathways (£2.1m)	44.5

Source: Data Unit Wales, 2010. Data Unit Wales Dissemination Tool, Youth Service Finance Data. Available from <http://dissemination.dataunitwales.gov.uk/webview/> [Accessed 20 June 2010]

- 2.7 The Welsh local government revenue settlement allocated by the Welsh Assembly Government includes an indicative figure for each local authority for the provision of the Youth Service in that area. Individual local authorities determine how much of this figure is delegated to the Youth

Service, forming the core Youth Service budget in each local authority. Analysis of core budgets as a percentage of the local government revenue settlement highlights the variations across Wales. In 2008-09 eight out of the twenty-two authorities set core budgets that were higher than the indicative settlement, noting delegation rates in excess of 100% in figure 1, below. The majority of local authorities had a core budget that was lower than the revenue settlement allocation. Five authorities had particularly low delegation rates (of 61% or lower).

Figure 1: Local government revenue settlement delegation rates, 2008-09



Source: Local Government Data Unit Wales, 2010. The Local Authority Youth Service in Wales

2.8 Although authorities supplement their core budget with income from other sources in order to support Youth Services, there is a need for those authorities where delegation rates are lowest to increase the amount of funding that is passed on to the Youth Service. This is underlined in previous youth support service inspection reports where Estyn has commented on the fact that low levels of investment impact on provision and standards of Youth Service provision.³

³A report on the quality of youth support services in one local authority noted: “The underfunding of the statutory Youth Service limits the capacity of the local authority to address the needs of young people.” Estyn, 2007. *A Report on the Quality of Youth Support Services in [...]*. Estyn. Available from http://www.estyn.gov.uk/inspection_reports_index/youth_support_services.asp. [Accessed 23 June 2010].

2.9 Linked to this, Table 1 above shows that funding derived through additional sources has increased significantly during the lifetime of the National Strategy. Across Wales, this increased from £13.7m in 2006-07 to £19.2m in 2008-09. Principal Youth Officers (PYOs) reported that any additional funding is gratefully accepted; however applying for and managing myriad funding streams was described as ‘time consuming’ and often ‘confusing’. They would rather manage activities as part of core funding. PYOs noted that activities funded through core budgets are less vulnerable and it is easier to plan more strategically and sustainably.

Spend per head of population

LA 5

2.10 The National Youth Service Strategy (2007) included a target to increase the annual amount spent from the current £56 per year (2005/06 figures) for each young person between the ages of 11-25 years. The additional investment referred to in 2.4 and 2.5 has served to increase the amount spent across Wales per young person (Tables 2 and 3). Spending increased from £63 per head in 2006-07 to £74 per head in 2008-09, which corresponds to an increase of 32.1% from the 2005/06 baseline.

2.11 Data published by the Local Government Data Unit Wales shows that spend per head among young people aged 13-19 has also increased over the same period. This increased from £132 per head in 2006-07 to £159 in 2008-09, a rise of 20% since the publication of the National Youth Service Strategy.

Table 2: Spend per head of youth population (£ per head)

	Total spend per youth population aged 11-25 (per head)		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Wales	£63	£67	£74

Source: Local authority Youth Service returns 2006-07 to 2008-09; Registrar General's mid-year estimates, Office for National Statistics (as reported in Local Authority Youth Service in Wales 2008-09, Local Government Data Unit Wales)

Table 3: Spend per head of youth population aged 13-19 (£ per head)

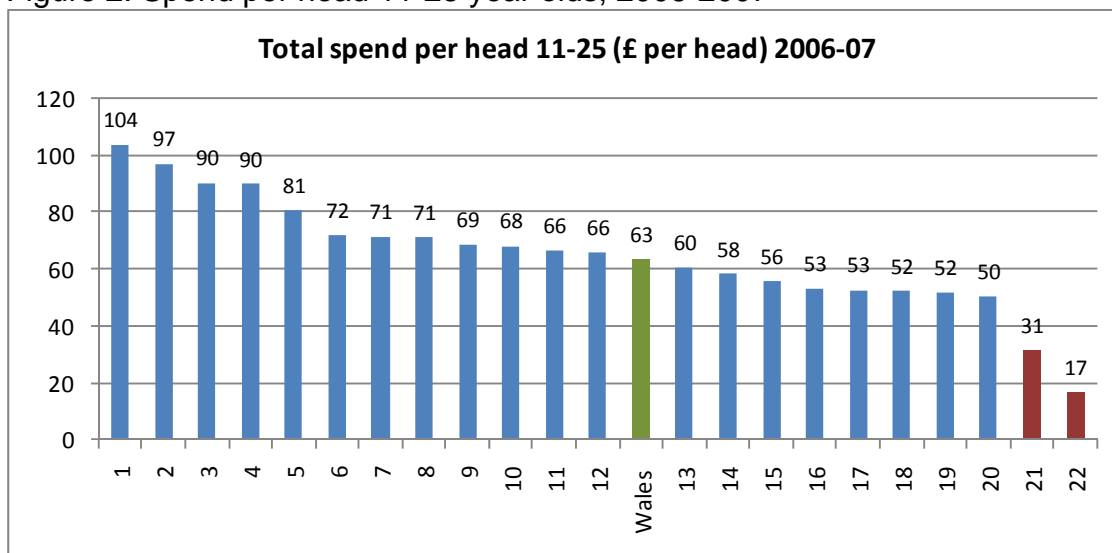
	Total spend per youth population aged 13-19 (per head)		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Wales	£132	£142	£159

Source: Local authority Youth Service returns 2006-07 to 2008-09; Registrar General's mid-year estimates, Office for National Statistics (as reported in Local Authority Youth Service in Wales 2008-09, Local Government Data Unit Wales)

2.12 While these figures are undoubtedly to be welcomed, a closer examination of the data reveals several points of concern. Firstly, despite the overall increases across Wales, the total spend per young person aged 11-25 fell in five local authority areas over the two year period. In one authority, spend per head fell from £68 to £44 (a decrease of 35%) between 2006-07 and 2008-09: this fall was reported despite increased revenue settlement funding in that particular authority.

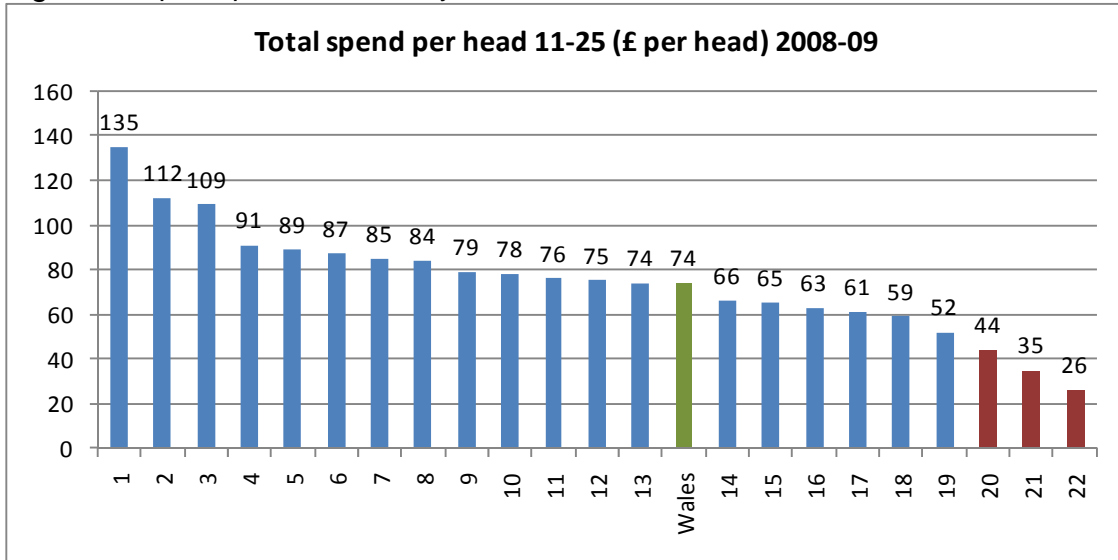
2.13 Secondly, analysis shows that the variations across local authorities– which were already extensive in 2006-07 – have become more marked. In 2008-09 there was a difference in spending of £109 per head between the authorities with the highest and lowest figures (see Figure 2) compared with a difference of £87 two years previously.

Figure 2: Spend per head 11-25 year olds, 2006-2007



Source: Local Government Data Unit Wales, 2010. The Local Authority Youth Service in Wales

Figure 3: Spend per head 11-25 year olds, 2008-2009



Source: Local Government Data Unit Wales, 2010. The Local Authority Youth Service in Wales

- 2.14 Some interviewees consider that imbalances in spending result in inequalities in terms of the quality and range of opportunities for young people. One Youth Service manager noted that ‘a lack of investment inhibits the delivery of the [National Youth Service] Strategy’. Another contributor to the evaluation, an experienced youth worker, reflected on the wide variations in spend and delegation rates across Wales and commented that the level of investment locally ‘depended on the political situation, on who manages and on whether they are from a Youth Service background’. Local context and circumstance – as well as historical factors – appear therefore to exercise considerable influence on patterns of funding.
- 2.15 The Welsh Assembly Government has, during the lifetime of the National Youth Service Strategy, reviewed the Revenue Support Grant allocation for local authority Youth Services, and negotiated increases to these allocations. This satisfies, in part, objective 1.2 of the Strategy. However, it is difficult to conclude that the most effective balance between national, regional and local funding streams has been achieved. This is examined in greater detail below, from the perspective of youth workers and senior Youth Service managers.

Practitioners' perspectives on funding issues

- 2.16 During interviews with PYOs as part of the evaluation it was noted that additional funding linked to the National Youth Service Strategy was not announced until a year after the Strategy's publication. It is clear that, for some, this had an adverse effect on how the Strategy was perceived by individuals working in the Youth Service. A number noted that the document was not a 'key driver of change for the Youth Service' (PYO); it was viewed as more of a framework or checklist that served to 'confirm a number of developments that were already in progress or being planned' (PYO). The announcement of new funding can, understandably, have a significant impact on the perceived status and profile of a strategy.
- 2.17 Practitioners were asked as part of the evaluation survey whether, during the lifetime of the Strategy, new provision had been introduced in their local area. Out of 145 respondents, 53 (or 35.6%) answered 'yes, new provision has been introduced' and that 'this was as a result of additional funding'. This indicates that many appreciated the opportunities presented as a result of the additional funding that came forward following the Strategy. This view was also shared by the Principal Youth Officers during consultations, with several explaining that 'the additional capital and revenue funding made an enormous difference'. In some cases it had enabled the local authority to carry out long-planned building improvements or introduce new services requested by young people:
- The revenue and capital [funding] has been superb. We've been a sad and neglected service, but this has enabled new activities, new staff, new stuff like the youth bank and now our voluntary sector youth grant scheme. It's allowed us to make decisions that help others (PYO).
- 2.18 However, the general view expressed by practitioners was that a lack of funding remains the key challenge facing those organisations delivering services to young people. The questionnaire circulated to youth workers as part of the evaluation posed the question 'what changes should be made in order to improve youth services in your local area or nationally?'
- 2.19 Funding was cited as the issue of greatest concern to practitioners (see Appendix 3 which summarises youth workers' responses). It is not possible

to present all comments here but the extracts below are illustrative of the main comments provided.

'We need more resources to enable those in greatest need to receive appropriate support,' Youth work manager.

'Youth services are crying out for substantial additional capital and revenue funding to enable us to build on existing provision,' Duke of Edinburgh Development Officer.

'I'm afraid what is needed to improve youth services throughout Wales is the one thing we all struggle for - proper funding to deliver what is extremely important work,' Youth worker.

'Additional funding to support an ever-evolving Youth Service to meet young people's needs on an on-going basis. Less reliance on external funding,' Youth worker.

'More funding to improve facilities and employ more qualified youth workers,' Youth work manager.

2.20 Youth workers and project officers who were visited as part of the evaluation also expressed concern about funding shortages and the associated problems in planning provision for young people. One youth worker in the voluntary sector was keen to note that this call was not merely 'another clamour for extra cash'. He explained:

Youth services in both the voluntary and statutory sector are significantly under-funded. We need additional funding that is linked to specific strategic objectives. These monies should be ring-fenced for those services so that organisations delivering youth work can plan ahead and meet strategic targets (Voluntary sector youth work manager).

2.21 Evidence suggests that many practitioners support the vision for the Youth Service set out in the National Strategy, however delivering many of the objectives remains a challenge. Despite the additional funding that has been made available at a national level, there is a perception among many practitioners that funding for the Youth Service is being 'squeezed' and that budgets are likely to tighten further over the coming years.

Other findings from fieldwork

- 2.22 The Welsh Assembly Government has sought to increase income to the Youth Service by making provisions for funding from other sources to be used to support activities. For example, WAG officials have liaised with Communities First programme managers and negotiated the employment of youth workers through this funding stream.
- 2.23 Funding associated with the delivery of the National Youth Service Strategy has been used to encourage new partnerships between the maintained and voluntary sector Youth Service:
- With regards to the grants we've reached out to new organisations, some we didn't even know of; it enabled us to work with partners that we couldn't otherwise. And it's had a knock on effect: it's not just the money but now we borrow resources, share training and so on. The strategy was a springboard, to help us bring people in (PYO).
- 2.24 Several of the PYOs explained that grant funding had been targeted towards supporting voluntary organisations; indeed, one area reported that the entire capital grant was distributed to the voluntary sector through a competitive tender process. Contributors to the evaluation also believed that the ability to increase the grant-funding of voluntary organisations has resulted in voluntary organisations working in ways that better reflect the objectives and vision of the Strategy. In some cases, local authorities had used actions contained in the Strategy as key awarding criteria when assessing funding applications. (Examples of other statutory-voluntary sector partnerships facilitated are provided in chapter 5 of this report.)
- 2.25 Three local authorities have taken an innovative approach to using the additional Capital funding tied to the Strategy. These authorities pooled their funding so that, rather than have three smaller sums over three successive years, they had a larger sum to invest in major capital projects during one year. In this way, it was felt that each of the Youth Services could invest more significant sums into strategic projects that would have a more lasting impact on the quality of provision in their area.

Young people's perspective

2.26 Young people consulted did not appear to have been aware of increases in funding; indeed for the most part the perception among them was that funding had decreased. During the workshop exercises when asked whether there were any issues or problems with taking part in activities through the youth club or youth forum, several cited 'funding', and specific examples were given of changes to Youth Service provision linked to funding.

'Funding has changed; it's affected transport. We used to be picked up to go to forum and events. I've been involved for four years. In that time we've lost the bus [transport to youth council], we lost taxis' (Young person, Neath Port Talbot).

'We really need to get funding, because otherwise Tanyard might shut down. It's being going round for ages that Tanyard might close down this year'
(Young person, voluntary sector youth club, Pembroke).

'...everything's broken. We've asked about getting new stuff, but they said *too expensive*'
(Anglesey youth forum member).

'There's less grants these days, if you want to do things then there are no grants.'
(Anglesey youth forum member).

2.27 The young people explained that often they weren't short of equipment but that it was often the building that they were in which caused the problems, so while 'the building is ruined', they've 'had a new dance mat'. There was a perception too of differences in funding in different areas: 'places like Communities First get more attention during the summer than us, like trips'.

2.28 Some young people reported that youth workers were encouraging them to take part in fundraising activities, which was met with pessimism by one individual:

[the youth worker] says you'll have to help raise funds, but he doesn't do anything to help us. With the fundraising, we've already done everything we can (Young person, Anglesey).

Summary conclusions on funding and resources

2.29 Analysis reveals that the level of resources available for Youth Service provision has increased since the publication of the National Youth Service

Strategy. In this sense, a key aim of the Strategy has been achieved. However, there remain a number of concerns, not least the wide variation in funding across local authorities. Although the amount spent on young people aged 11-25 has increased significantly, the differential in funding between the highest and lowest funding authorities is significant and unjustifiable. Given the extent of these imbalances in funding across Wales, this can only mean that there are inequalities in terms of the range and quality of provision, at a time when the Welsh Assembly Government is committed to increasing opportunities for all young people.

- 2.30 There is scope for a number of local authorities to increase the funding allocated to core Youth Service budgets. There is some evidence to suggest that this may be more likely if local Youth Services were, in planning and delivering provision, required to work towards common national standards. (This is examined in greater detail in chapter 8 of this report.) Linked to this, strengthening the statutory basis for the Youth Service in Wales could help to raise the profile of the service and support greater investment.

3 Integrated policy development and delivery

- 3.1 Another key strategic action included in the National Youth Service Strategy was to establish a new integrated structure that links national, regional and local policy making and delivery. In so doing, the aim was to reflect a number of the goals set out in the Assembly Government's response to the Beecham Report, notably the emphasis on working together to ensure consistency between the national strategy, regional planning and local delivery. This section focuses on actions taken during the lifetime of the Strategy to establish an integrated structure and presents the views of policy makers and practitioners on their effectiveness and impact.

WAG 2;
LA 1

Overview of national and regional planning structures

Welsh Assembly Government's Youth Strategy Branch

- 3.2 The Youth Strategy Branch is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Strategy and for promoting a cohesive structure, in line with that set out in action 2. WAG officials have carried out visits to all 22 local authorities to understand how provision is planned both locally and regionally in response to young people's needs. This has been received favourably by Principal Youth Officers and other senior managers within the Youth Service. The Branch has encouraged PYOs and regional partnerships (see 3.1.3, below) to ensure that their plans for the Youth Service are underpinned and guided by the priorities and objectives set out in the National Strategy. Officials within the Youth Strategy Branch consider that it is essential that they establish and maintain good relationships with Principal Youth Officers in driving forward a revised National Strategy. The Branch has relocated to the Welsh Assembly Government offices in Llandudno Junction since September 2010.

Principal Youth Officers Group

- 3.3 A number of the elements in the integrated structure were in place before the publication of the Strategy, including the Principal Youth Officers Group (PYOG) which had been established in 2006 as a sub group within the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) structure. Meetings provide an opportunity for PYOs to network with colleagues across Wales and also serve as a training and development forum for PYOs. The PYOG also shares information on emerging policies and initiatives, formulating a collective PYO response and recommendations. In this respect it forms an important part of an integrated structure, providing an interface between national policy and local delivery.
- 3.4 As part of the study, the evaluation team attended a meeting of the PYOG to gauge their views on the impact and effectiveness of the Youth Service Strategy. The Youth Service Strategy has not had an impact on the structure of PYOG meetings, although the Strategy has been the focus of discussion during PYOG meetings. It was apparent that there is a strong appetite among PYOs to be closely involved in the development of a revised National Youth Service Strategy.

Regional PYO partnerships

- 3.5 The Strategy also proposed that regional partnerships should be developed, building on the existing ADEW consortia. The vision for these groups, as noted in the National Youth Service Strategy, was that they would provide 'strategic direction for the delivery of activities that contribute to outcomes set out in the national strategy⁴.' Although some activity had been carried out by regional partnerships previously, the Strategy proposed formalising the structure. Two Regional Partnerships have drafted Terms of Reference to guide their activities. It should be noted that the Strategy was not the only driver of moves towards greater regional collaboration. A paper produced by the PYOG notes:

⁴ Welsh Assembly Government, 2007. *Young people, youth work, Youth Service: National Youth Service Strategy for Wales.* (p.24)

Due to developments highlighted in the Beecham report and Making the Connections agenda on regionalisation, the National Youth Service Strategy, the guidance for convergence funds and proposals for the delivery of youth work training there will be an expectation on us to collaborate closer with our neighbouring authorities and, where relevant, other organisations from the sector (e.g. voluntary sector and HEIs).⁵

- 3.6 The Welsh Assembly Government provided funding of £5,000 per annum to support the regional partnerships, with each of the four regions assigned responsibility to focus on specific topics or spheres of work (see below).

Regional partnership	Topic
North Wales	Promotion and marketing
South West and Mid	Quality, national standards and MIS
Central South	Workforce development and Pilot induction pack (the latter in collaboration with YMCA College)
South East	Participation and involvement in decision making

- 3.7 The regional partnerships were intended to share effective practice and contribute to decisions on funding allocations at a regional level. The evaluation found evidence to indicate that some regional partnerships do collaborate and share good practice in an effective manner. One PYO commented:

as a PYO who is relatively new in post, the regional partnership has been extremely supportive, providing a link to expertise and experience in other local authority areas (PYO).

- 3.8 One interviewee explained that there has been a culture of cooperation in some regions – the new structure has helped to embed and strengthen these partnerships which existed only informally previously. In other regions, joint-working is a relatively new concept and is likely to take longer to establish.
- 3.9 There are signs that regional approaches to planning youth work and workforce development are becoming more common. A number of PYOs noted that cross-authority training events had been arranged following regional partnership meetings, meaning that youth workers from different

⁵ Wales Principal Youth Officers Group paper, 2010. *Structure for Meetings 2010*.

areas and settings had been brought together and had discussed a range of professional development issues.

- 3.10 The impact of the regional groups has also been evidenced in more strategic ways: for example the work of the Central South Wales Regional Partnership informed the development of the National Workforce Development Strategy. Principal Youth Officers from the smaller authorities particularly welcomed the opportunity presented in the regional partnerships to share materials and to learn from good practice. As noted in some of the comments below, there was also evidence of regional partners working together to pool resources in order to maximise the impact of additional Youth Service Strategy Capital funding. Regional groups also enable peer support to happen, both informally and in more structured ways. Another tangible outcome from one of the regional partnerships was the preparation of draft national standards for the Youth Service in Wales.

'For me the invaluable bit is I'm learning from others about what makes the Youth Service tick. I think they draw on me for my other knowledge and strengths... but we certainly share tools, like for example, I want to put part time youth workers on a contract. I haven't got any contracts in my place. I put out a question, has anybody got this already, and they shared what they had. Then [] came and asked 'what's your structure like, we're thinking of going this way, what do you think?' It's good peer support and mentoring' (PYO, South west and mid Wales).

'The regional partnership is crucial. At first I thought 'what's the point' but it's been the best thing. For example there's been a wealth of opportunities in our area around multiculturalism and it's been superb for us to tap into that. We're all working together to use every penny, using resources to full potential. We've shared visits, had shadowing opportunities in other authorities, all sorts' (PYO, south east Wales).

'In the last 10 years we've worked closely with [] and always done joint training, but in the last two years the other authorities have come on board' (PYO, south Wales).

- 3.11 Not all PYOs felt that regional groups had yet had the desired impact. One north Wales PYO explained: 'We've never fulfilled our potential as a region because of capacity and time'.

- 3.12 However the general consensus is that regional partnerships are viewed as a positive development; PYOs and WAG representatives consider that there is scope for them to work more effectively to share information between local authorities and to feed good practice up through the main

PYOG and to inform approaches to youth work on a national level. PYOs should also ensure that good practice identified during regional meetings is disseminated throughout their local authority area, acting as a conduit of expertise between all levels of the Youth Service.

Local level partnerships

- 3.13 More generally the Strategy sets out a vision for partnership working at the local level and since 2004 local authorities have had a statutory responsibility to improve the well-being of children and young people via effective partnership working. Most of the PYOs interviewed reported strong partnership working at a local level. The Youth Service comes under the responsibility of the Children and Young People's Partnership, and has a key part to play in contributing to the Partnerships and to their planning mechanism, the statutory Children and Young People's Plans⁶ which were initiated in the early period of the Youth Service Strategy.
- 3.14 Some of the Local Authority plans make a clear link to the Youth Service Strategy and explain that it has informed their work, while others make no mention at all, or make very little reference to areas of work. However many of the PYOs reported strong partnership working and close links with other organisations delivering services to young people in their area. Joint workforce development is a key element of partnership working and the greater integration of services. There is however still much room for improvement in this respect according to those interviewed for this evaluation and the level of integration between the workforce planning of the CYPP, individual partners and the Youth Service regional groups was questioned (see also chapter 4) .

⁶ A three-year strategic vision for all services provided to children and young people in the local area, based on the Assembly Government's seven core aims for them.

Voluntary sector partnerships

- 3.15 Interviews with representatives of the voluntary sector found a strong appetite to contribute to policy making at a national, regional and local level. However, many organisations are limited by a lack of capacity to engage in strategic planning and the integrated structure to which the Welsh Assembly Government aspires. As a result, the Youth Work Strategy Branch in WAG provided funding to support the creation of 4 Regional Voluntary Services Consortia to mirror the PYO and ADEW regional groups. £5000 was provided to each regional consortium with the aim of informing national policy, share effective practice and contribute to decisions about funding allocation. VS 1
- 3.16 As these groups have only very recently been established – later than proposed in the National Strategy – it is too early to draw conclusions on their effectiveness and impact. However, this is an important development and one which helps to ensure that voluntary sector organisations across Wales can potentially play a central part in shaping the future delivery of Youth Services in Wales.

Joint Strategic Group (JSG) for the Youth Service in Wales

- 3.17 The JSG forms an important part of the integrated structure, serving as an independent voice for the Youth Service. The JSG emerged out of the *Standing Conference for Youth Work in Wales* and was formally established in June 2009. Its aim, as described in the constitution, is:
- to be an independent national strategic forum through which Statutory, Voluntary and other Youth Service bodies can improve working together for the benefit of young people, and to provide a unified voice for the Youth Service in Wales.
- 3.18 The principle of collaboration between the statutory and voluntary sector is reflected in the fact that the PYOG and CWVYS share responsibility for the Chair and the secretariat for meetings. The JSG serves a key function as an independent body that acts as a strategic link between the Youth Service and the Welsh Assembly Government, and other agencies.

Summary conclusions on relevant actions (WAG 2; LA 1; VS 1)

- 3.19 Evidence suggests that the structures put in place since the publication of the Youth Service Strategy do pave the way for an integrated approach to planning Youth Services, with greater opportunities for regional collaboration at all levels, including PYOs, training managers and youth workers.
- 3.20 The regional partnerships for both PYOs and the voluntary sector are important developments that are consistent with the regionalisation agenda set out in Making the Connections. The importance of these groups is evidenced in the tangible outcomes recorded above in paragraphs 3.5 – 3.10 and in 5.25
- 3.21 A number of elements within this structure existed either informally or in another guise prior to the publication of the National Strategy. However the Strategy did provide impetus that has helped formalise and strengthen a more collaborative and partnership-based approach to planning Youth Service delivery.

4 Workforce development

WAG 3;
LA 2

- 4.1 The National Youth Service strategy described the Youth Service workforce as its most valuable asset and that the ‘development and implementation of a Workforce Development Plan is critically important to the achievement of our vision for the Youth Service⁷’. A number of recent Estyn reports have focused on training and workforce development for youth workers⁸. These reports have concluded that, while the National Youth Service Strategy provides a good strategic basis for the collaborative development of youth and community worker training, significant challenges remain. A number of these challenges relate to improving communication and developing more coherent and effective approaches to workforce development on a regional level.
- 4.2 This section assesses progress in relation to actions under WAG 3 in the Strategy and considers how effectively some of the challenges cited in previous research are being met. It draws on qualitative interviews with Youth Service managers and evidence collected from youth workers during visits and through the survey.

The process of developing a National Workforce Development Plan

- 4.3 A Workforce Development Plan for the Youth Service in Wales was developed over a two year period following the Strategy’s publication. The aim of the Plan was described as being:
- to prepare and support the workforce to deliver a fit-for-purpose service which meets the needs of young people and the requirements of government policy.
- 4.4 Working with partners in the statutory and voluntary sector, the Plan set out 10 strategic actions to deliver this aim which aspires to ensure consistency in quality and opportunities for youth work students, a coherent approach to

⁷ Welsh Assembly Government, 2007. *Young people, youth work, Youth Service: National Youth Service Strategy for Wales. (p.24)*

⁸ Estyn, 2010. *A survey of professional qualification training for youth workers in Wales.*
Estyn, 2009a. *Good features and shortcomings of local authority youth services.*
Estyn, 2009b. *How good is the training of youth support workers in Wales.*

regional planning and delivery and specific actions relating to registration, CPD and a Code of Ethics (see Appendix 4 for the strategic actions in full).

4.5 Following this, a draft Workforce Development Action Plan has been produced, setting out in greater detail the specific actions to be taken forward, and assigning responsibilities to various partners including Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), the PYOG, the Education and Training Standards committee⁹ (ETS), the Welsh Assembly Government and the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWWYS).

4.6 The initial Workforce Development Plan and subsequent Action Plan have been informed by the work of the regional PYOG in central south Wales, who focus on workforce development issues. Interviews with senior Youth Service managers during this evaluation collected views on the process of developing the Plan and found a degree of frustration among some that it has taken longer than expected to develop the Plan and agree specific actions to be delivered:

It seems to have taken a long time to address issues that have been in place for a long time (Principal Youth Officer).

4.7 The National Strategy noted the need to introduce processes and procedures for implementing a collaborative approach to regional and local delivery. Through the regional PYO groups, Youth Services have put in place arrangements for joint working. To date, however, it appears that the regional structure has not resulted in significant changes to the way in which workforce planning at a regional level is carried out. Indeed, one Training Officer interviewed during the evaluation noted that regional Training Officers meet 'less frequently now than previously'.

4.8 Another explained that communication between Training Officers nationally had become a barrier:

We've lost the all Wales contact. We used to meet twice a year but not anymore. We're not sharing nationally.training has never been more important but it's not addressed nationally (Training Officer).

⁹ The Education Training Standards (ETS) committees in England, Ireland and Wales operate a process of professional endorsement for higher education diploma and degree courses.

- 4.9 The Welsh Assembly Government, working with the PYOG, should work to improve communication with officers responsible for coordinating training and workforce development in delivering the Workforce Development Action Plan.
- 4.10 Estyn's recent review of youth support worker training¹⁰ found that there are conflicting demands between workforce planning at local Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) level and regional consortia levels. This issue was raised during the evaluation, with Training Officers sceptical about how much cross-over and integration there was between the workforce element of CYPP plans and the work of the regional groups. At this point in time it is unclear how this will be addressed within the draft Action Plan, however it is key, given the emphasis on integrated policy development and delivery, as covered in Chapter 2 of this report.

Progress against strategic targets and actions

- 4.11 The same Estyn report¹¹ found that insufficient account is taken by Principal Youth Officers in their workforce planning of the objectives and priorities included in the National Youth Service Strategy. The Strategy notes that:
- [WAG should] agree joint action for ensuring that a minimum of 90% of those employed full-time are qualified to JNC Professional level qualification¹²; and
 - identify actions to ensure that a minimum of 90% of those employed part-time (across Wales) are qualified to Youth Support Worker level 1 or 2.
- 4.12 Our interviews with PYOs found that they were aware of the actions included in the Strategy and that they are working towards the targets. The balance of opinion among PYOs is that progress towards improving the

¹⁰ Estyn (April 2009) *How good is the training of youth support workers in Wales?*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Youth and Community Workers recognises youth and community workers' qualifications. The professional qualification for youth workers was at diploma level (level 5) for the period of the Strategy and rose to honours degree level (level 6) in September 2010

skills and qualifications of the youth workforce is being made, but that this is a medium to long term objective.

- 4.13 In recent years, the proportion of the workforce holding JNC professional qualifications has fluctuated, as shown in table 3 below, however it remains far below the target included in the National Youth Service Strategy.

Table 4: Percentage of full-time management and delivery staff with JNC professional qualifications

	All staff	Management staff	Delivery staff
2006-07	76%	98%	76%
2007-08	68%	90%	65%
2008-09	70%	96%	68%

Source: Local Government Data Unit Wales, 2010. The Local Authority Youth Service in Wales

- 4.14 The trend in terms of qualifications among part-time youth workers is more encouraging. Over the past three years for which data is available, the proportion of part-time or short-term delivery staff with either JNC professional level qualification or who are youth support work qualified has increased from 63% to 81% (Table 4). However this national level data hides considerable variations in qualification levels between authorities.

Table 5: Percentage of part-time youth workers with youth support worker qualified or above

	All part-time youth workers
2006-07	63%
2007-08	68%
2008-09	81%

Source: Local Government Data Unit Wales, 2010. The Local Authority Youth Service in Wales

- 4.15 In working to achieve a more qualified workforce it is essential that the priorities set out by the Assembly Government in its National Strategy are matched by local authority Youth Services and regional consortia.
- 4.16 The development of a manifesto for the youth work workforce in Wales, along with the Youth Work National Occupational Standards and Youth Work Curriculum Statement provide a framework for a more coordinated approach. The establishment of the CWVYS Training Consortium this year

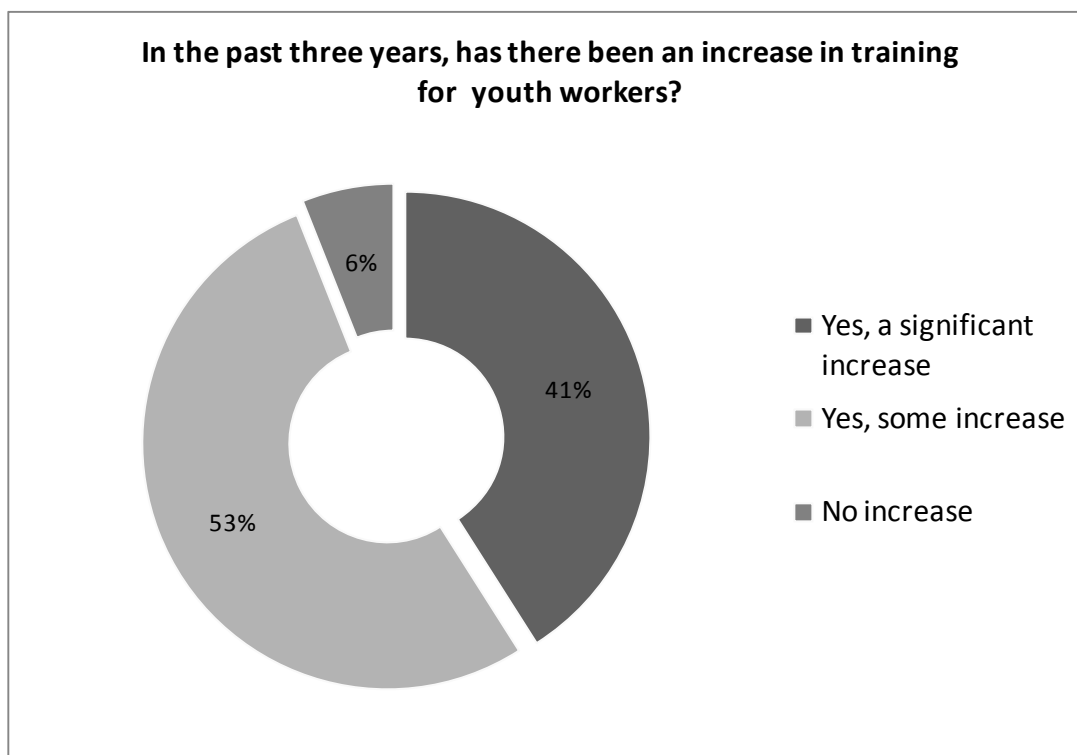
seeks to ensure that the workforce development and training needs of voluntary sector organisations are identified and addressed.

- 4.17 The Strategy also included an action to develop and implement a Continuing Professional Development programme. Currently, local authorities administer a Training Grant which supports initial training for youth workers and CPD. The Workforce Development Plan proposes using the Training Grant to fund 'a Regional system for the delivery of Youth Support Worker and In-Service Training at all levels'. The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure that a nationally agreed CPD framework for youth workers is developed as a matter of priority, as this does not appear to have been auctioned based on the evidence presented during the evaluation.

Evidence from practitioners

- 4.18 There is a perception among practitioners that the amount of training provided to youth workers has increased over the past three years. 41% of youth workers who completed the evaluation questionnaire consider that there has been a significant increase in training delivered. A further 53% feel that there has been some increase. Only a small proportion (6%) reported that there has not been an increase in training provision and none of those who responded considered that training opportunities for youth workers had decreased.

Figure 4: Training for youth workers



Source: Arad survey of youth workers

Overall increase in amount of training available

4.19 Reflecting the data presented above, a number of practitioners commented that a greater choice of training opportunities was now available to youth workers. Some cited specific qualifications that they had been encouraged to pursue. Others observed that there had been a noticeable improvement in the training 'offer' in recent times:

All youth workers receive training to the appropriate level in our authority area, which wasn't the case 2 or 3 years ago (Youth worker).

Others noted the impact of regionalisation on workforce development:

Regional training events for south east Wales are now a regular part of the programme (Youth Worker).

4.20 This view was echoed by one Youth Service manager in mid Wales, who also noted that the closer working on a regional basis has led to more joint training, shared working and the exchange of good practice. This individual sounded a note of caution:

I would comment that the increased level of training, both nationally and corporately, has the possibility of negatively affecting staff as they are being taken away from their core business - youth work!

(Youth Service manager).

- 4.21 Most practitioners, however, welcomed the additional training opportunities. Principal Youth Officers also remarked on difference in outlook to workforce development shown by youth workers.

I have definitely noticed a more positive attitude to training from many youth workers (PYO).

One manager explained that internal training was also a tool that could be used to improve the quality of the Youth Service locally. It was suggested that staff and managers with common aims can now share thoughts on provision for young people and come up with solutions in a more cost effective way.

Partnerships and collaboration

- 4.22 Practitioners pointed to a number of local partnerships between the Youth Service and other agencies which support workforce development. A number of these comments underlined the importance of joint planning and delivery.

'We deliver the NVQ in youth work in partnership with Coleg Gwent and the Youth Service in the neighbouring local authority' (Training manager).

'The Duke of Edinburgh does not work in isolation within our authority. Training sessions and good practice are shared throughout Wales. Much of the training takes place in other authorities, which enables us to learn from practice elsewhere and create links with other youth workers' (Duke of Edinburgh Award Development Officer).

'[Youth workers] in our area have attended training by organisations linked to social care and housing' (Youth worker).

- 4.23 A number of the new opportunities, it was reported, involve close working between the maintained and voluntary sector Youth Service.

'There has been an increase in training delivered to the voluntary sector – in our area we have worked with the local association of voluntary organisations to deliver training and support the development of voluntary youth groups' (Youth worker).

'We offer our training events to external partners as well as our staff' (Youth worker).

'There is a very effective workforce development programme coordinated by our Youth Service training officer which includes training alongside partner agencies, including the voluntary sector. The CYPP strategy is supporting Local Resource Solution Partnerships which is indirectly leading to the sharing of knowledge and training needs' (Youth worker).

4.24 There was also an example provided of partnership working between one large voluntary sector organisation and the statutory sector to increase training opportunities for youth workers through the medium of Welsh.

4.25 Not all respondents considered that the links between the voluntary and statutory sector Youth Service were totally satisfactory:

As a voluntary service working with young people with disabilities, we are often not made aware of training through our local Youth Service.

When we have been able to find out about opportunities, it is often too short notice for us to attend (Voluntary sector youth worker).

4.26 Some of those who contributed to the evaluation also commented on the type of training and qualifications available to youth workers. During interviews and in written comments, a small number of individuals were critical of the approach to workforce development for youth workers:

What the Youth Service needs is more practitioners with experience and perspective, not just graduates who automatically assume they will be managers (PYO)

and,

I'm sceptical about the scramble to achieve qualifications. In some instances, I think this can happen at the expense of developing staff who truly understand youth work and all that it entails (PYO).

Summary conclusions on relevant actions

- 4.27 Developing and implementing a National Workforce Development Plan for the Youth Service has been a slower process than originally anticipated by many in the Youth Service. The development of a manifesto for the youth work workforce in Wales, along with the roll out of the Workforce Development action plan promises to deliver a more coordinated approach, with regional planning key.
- 4.28 Evidence collected from practitioners as part of the evaluation indicates that training opportunities do appear to be increasing. The challenge is to ensure that the training delivered, including a coordinated programme of CPD, reflects the priorities and vision set out in the National Strategy.

5 Voluntary sector actions

Strategic direction and management in the voluntary sector

VS 1

- 5.1 CWVYS plays a key strategic role in promoting the delivery of services which contribute to the outcomes set out in the National Strategy. CWVYS disseminates the key actions and the vision of the strategy to its membership, which has increased to over 50 organisations across Wales.
- 5.2 There are strong links between the Strategy and CWVYS' strategic plan, which reflects the key themes of regionalisation, workforce development and participation of young people in decision-making. CWVYS' strategic plan, in turn, informs the work of its member organisations. Priorities are communicated down through CWVYS' executive group to managers of voluntary Youth Service organisations and ultimately to youth workers.

'Reach' and profile of the strategy across the voluntary sector

- 5.3 There are mechanisms in place, therefore, for the objectives set out in the national Strategy to filter down to voluntary sector organisations at 'ground level'. Awareness of the Strategy among voluntary sector organisations has been boosted by the requirement to refer to it in funding applications (e.g. youth work training grant; the National Voluntary Organisations grant scheme):

Organisations seeking funding through a number of grants would have become aware that the National Youth Service strategy set the policy tone that they needed to abide by (Voluntary sector youth work manager).

- 5.4 However, this is not uniform across the voluntary sector: many smaller voluntary sector organisations remain either unaware of the National Youth Service Strategy or unclear as to their role in contributing to its aims. One voluntary sector representative commented:

Smaller organisations, for whom capacity is a big issue, are unsure how their work links to the broader national strategy (Manager, voluntary sector representative organisation).

- 5.5 A number of voluntary sector youth workers interviewed during the evaluation explained that, while they were aware of the Strategy, they found it 'difficult to relate to'. It was suggested that for some small organisations the Youth Service Strategy and its actions would not have been on their radar at all. Referring to a local organisation working with young people, one representative of a CVS in west Wales noted, 'they are a two-man band and I doubt they have ever laid eyes on it (the Strategy).
- 5.6 Understandably, time is a barrier for many voluntary sector organisations: time to keep abreast of developments at a national policy level and to engage with local networks (including CYPPs) is often limited.
- 5.7 The challenge facing the Welsh Assembly Government and national representative bodies, such as CWVYS, is to identify solutions that make it easier for voluntary sector organisations of all sizes to engage and to contribute to priorities set out in the national Strategy. One example is workforce development: contributors to the evaluation referred to many of the practical barriers facing smaller voluntary sector youth work organisations when it comes to training and professional development. However, some also referred to solutions and opportunities that make it easier for such organisations to attend training. One such example provided was the YMCA Community College training courses, which offers a wide range of provision suitable for organisations of all sizes.

Regionalisation

- 5.8 One of the actions included in the National Youth Service Strategy charged the voluntary sector with developing a regional structure to mirror that set up in the maintained sector. Following on from this specific action, CWVYS' executive committee prepared a regionalisation plan, which was presented to the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning. The plan involved creating new voluntary sector regional officers, mirroring the ADEW structure. Although there was support for the proposal, no funding was available to support the plan at the time. Since then, regional voluntary sector consortia have been established, as noted in paragraphs 3.15 and 3.16 above.

- 5.9 These consortia, which are newly established, have an important role to play in the strategic direction and management of Youth Service activities in the voluntary sector. They represent an opportunity to bring together appropriate individuals who could work with the regional PYO groups and with regional Welsh Assembly Government officials to help inform national policy and share effective practice. These developments towards a more formalised regional structure are to be welcomed, however they have emerged approximately 12 months later than originally planned in the Youth Service Strategy.

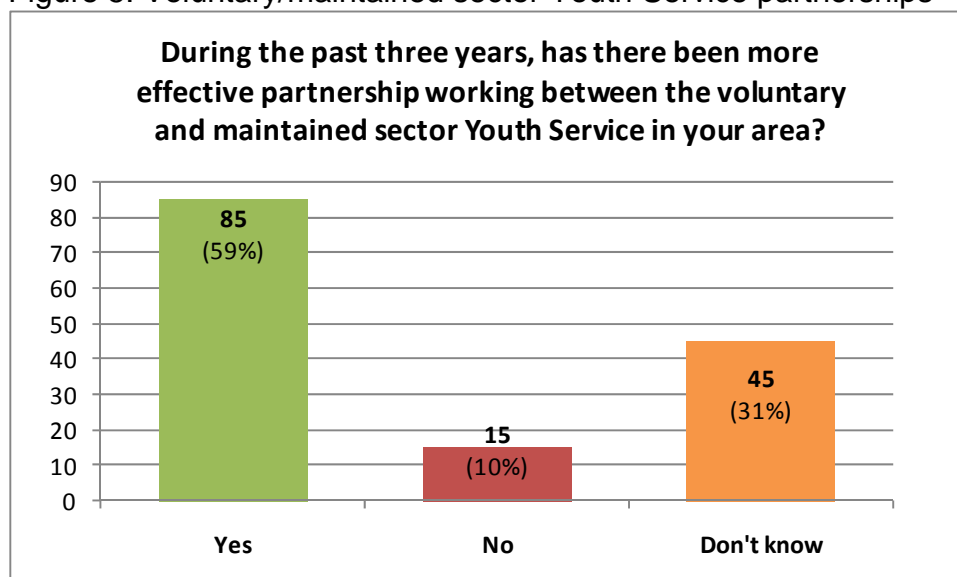
Supporting synergy between the voluntary and maintained Youth Service

- 5.10 The Youth Service Strategy set out to support effective synergy between the voluntary and maintained sector Youth Service. It included the aim of supporting strong partnerships that build on the strengths of each sector.
- 5.11 Structures are in place at a strategic level to support collaboration and synergy between the voluntary and maintained Youth Service. The Joint Strategic Group, whose functions are described in an earlier section of this report, involves equal representation from the voluntary and statutory sectors and enables discussion to take place at a strategic level between these sectors. One voluntary sector representative described the JSG as a 'very progressive group that helps to move forward the Youth Service Strategy agenda'.
- 5.12 Another notable development has been the formation of 10 task and finish groups which are working on Youth Service methodology handbooks. These handbooks are good practice guides, illustrating how different approaches to youth work can be effectively employed in different settings. The task and finish groups include representation from the maintained and voluntary sector Youth Service and are an example of collaboration that is focused on improving quality in the delivery of Youth Services.

Practitioners' views on partnerships between the voluntary and maintained Youth Service

5.13 As part of the evaluation, we were keen to explore practitioners' views on whether links between the voluntary and maintained sector Youth Service had improved since the Youth Service Strategy had been published. Of the 145 who completed the questionnaire that was circulated, 85 (59%) respondents considered that partnership working between the voluntary and maintained sector had been more effective. Only 15 respondents answered 'no' and just under a third did not know.

Figure 5: Voluntary/maintained sector Youth Service partnerships



Source: Arad survey of youth workers

- 5.14 Written submissions by youth workers and interviews carried out provided an insight into the type of new partnerships being cultivated and what is driving these developments.
- 5.15 Across Wales as a whole, it was reported that there is greater take up by voluntary organisations of training delivered by the Youth Service. In some instances, practitioners and Youth Service training managers suggested that this was largely a result of better communication between the sectors. Others noted that the statutory sector has become more proactive than in the past and now offers more training opportunities to voluntary sector organisations. It was also mentioned that this happens both ways, with the local authority advertising opportunities to the third sector and vice versa:

It's a virtuous circle in many ways – voluntary sector youth workers attend training alongside our [local authority] workers... they get to know each other and this can lead to collaboration on other projects (Youth Service Manager).

- 5.16 While informal links do emerge in this way, it is clear that more formal arrangements, including funding, have helped to support new partnerships. Local authority Youth Services have used revenue funding and Cymorth to fund voluntary sector youth development workers, thereby strengthening links. One voluntary sector organisation in south east Wales visited during the evaluation had in post as its manager an individual seconded from the statutory Youth Service, an arrangement which ensured that statutory-voluntary sector links were well embedded. Many other youth workers who completed the questionnaire noted that core funding was being used by the Youth Service to support posts in a range of voluntary sector organisations.
- 5.17 One contributor noted that the Strategy set out a broad framework that hasn't necessarily resulted in any significant changes but has steered some of the activities at a local level, resulting in a greater emphasis on voluntary/statutory partnership:
- In our authority area £100k of revenue funding is being used to support 15 key voluntary sector organisations, which is in keeping with, but not a result of the National Strategy (PYO).
- 5.18 Other contributors suggested that partnership working (including the sharing of resources, ideas and personnel) was due to budgetary constraints rather than a result of additional funding provided. Organisations across the maintained and voluntary sectors, it was claimed, are under pressure to make funding go further and are working together out of necessity.

Partnerships and quality of provision

- 5.19 A number of respondents considered that closer partnership working provided a way of improving the quality of services delivered to young people. One youth worker in south east Wales explained that the joint-

delivery of projects and activities with the voluntary sector encouraged continuous reappraisal of how provision is delivered:

The service is growing every year and so we are increasingly working with outside agencies, including the voluntary sector – as a result we are constantly re-examining how we do things to provide a better service (Youth worker).

- 5.20 More structured initiatives have also been introduced to ensure that closer partnership working also help to enhance the quality of provision:

In Wrexham, we have worked closely with the voluntary sector to develop an Excellence Award for Wrexham to ensure that both the voluntary and maintained sector are working towards common standards in their delivery of youth work, e.g. policies and accreditation (Youth service manager).

- 5.21 The key factor when considering the effectiveness of these partnerships is to what extent are they impacting on the provision available to young people. The evaluation sought to understand whether partnerships were serving to improve the quality and range of provision. The evaluation team visited a youth club in Pembrokeshire and found that the approach to service provision was well coordinated:

It works very well here – the voluntary and maintained sector work in the same building, providing young people with a wider range of opportunities (Youth worker).

Role of partnerships in rural areas

- 5.22 The importance of partnerships in rural areas was raised by a number of contributors. Opportunities for young people to take part in activities are often more limited in rural Wales, and therefore it is important that agencies across the voluntary and statutory sectors work together to extend opportunities to the greatest number of young people. Rural community partnerships were mentioned as being key, involving the statutory Youth Service and voluntary sector organisations, such as young farmers' clubs.

- 5.23 In addition, in many areas partners find innovative ways of putting on new opportunities. One respondent noted:

We have delivered many projects and activities in partnership with the voluntary sector. This has included large scale events, school holiday programmes and evening provision. Often the voluntary sector is able to attract necessary external funding and we [statutory Youth Service] can assist by providing staffing to ensure services are delivered (Youth worker).

- 5.24 Linked to this, the provision of youth development workers in parts of mid Wales has enabled the statutory sector to support local communities to first identify need in their area and then develop voluntary youth provision in some of the more rurally isolated communities. Initial discussions with youth workers as part of outreach activity was then fed onto the Youth Development workers who are currently working with the communities to support clubs.

Drivers of partnership and collaboration

- 5.25 Given that the majority of those who fed into the evaluation felt that partnerships between the statutory and voluntary sectors have become more effective, it is worth analysing evidence relating to the causes or drivers behind this. Evidently, funding has encouraged much of the participation. In addition to revenue funding being used to support key youth work posts in voluntary organisations, capital funding associated with the National Youth Service Strategy has been used to support projects and organisations from the voluntary sector.

- 5.26 One contributor summarised the situation in their local authority by explaining that a number of factors had influenced moves towards greater collaboration:

In the past 3 years, my organisation has become a partner with approximately 20 times as many organisations as we previously had links with. This has been driven by strategy, by funding and the growing understanding that the best result for young people is achieved by everyone working together (Strategic Youth Service Manager).

- 5.27 While funding that was specifically tied to the National Strategy had resulted in new partnerships, relatively few contributors, however, alluded

to the Strategy specifically as a key driver of more effective partnership working. Practitioners and managers mentioned a wide range of factors, some of which include:

- CYPPs being more effective in bringing organisations together;
- the increased profile of voluntary sector youth organisations, which has led to closer collaboration;
- more joint delivery of accredited programmes and projects (e.g. Prince's Trust, Duke of Edinburgh award);
- increased emphasis on, and interest in, particular topics (e.g. Global Citizenship and Sustainability; community safety) has driven some new partnerships with a range of voluntary sector organisations; and
- greater recognition of the strengths of the respective sectors, leading to more joint working.

5.28 It is unclear to what extent the National Youth Service Strategy has been a direct driver of increased collaboration between the statutory and voluntary sector Youth Service. Clearly there are diverse factors at play and, indeed, many organisations have been working together over many years. The comment below from one of the PYOs is broadly representative of the views of many, although some would clearly disagree (see 5.29):

There's less of a 'them and us' feel now, but I'm not sure if that's down to the strategy....where it hasn't brought more understanding it has brought more debate at least (PYO).

Contrasting views on voluntary-statutory partnerships

5.29 It should be noted that not all those who contributed to the evaluation considered that levels of joint working between the voluntary and statutory sectors have improved during the lifetime of the Strategy. Some felt there remained some fundamental 'attitudinal' barriers to partnership working between the two:

There is still a distinct split between the voluntary and maintained sector of the Youth Service; different clubs are reluctant to work with each other (Youth worker).

5.30 Others suggested that issues regarding communication and publicity can a barrier to closer engagement between the two parties:

Youth Achievement Awards were only publicised to Youth Service and not to the voluntary sector (Anonymous, questionnaire respondent).

5.31 One respondent resented the fact that organisations should be encouraged to collaborate with the maintained sector Youth Service.

Many of these organisations have different aims so why should they be forced to work together if they are happier on their own? It is not in the interests of most voluntary organisations, such as the ones I have worked with, to become involved in Partnerships as they are just talking shops anyway (Youth worker).

Summary conclusions on these actions

5.32 Structures are in place, both through CWVYS and the regional voluntary sector consortia, to ensure that the vision and priorities set out in the National Strategy can permeate down to organisational and delivery levels in the voluntary sector Youth Service. This being said, it would appear that the national Strategy remains a peripheral issue for many of the smaller voluntary sector organisations. For these organisations, time and capacity is a major barrier.

5.33 The majority of youth workers who contributed to this evaluation consider that partnerships between the voluntary and statutory sector have become more effective during the past three years. Few, however, attribute this to the Strategy, noting that there are wide-ranging reasons why voluntary and statutory organisations work increasingly closely together to delivery services to young people.

6 Ensuring quality and measuring impact

WAG 7,
8

- 6.1 Two actions for the Welsh Assembly Government focus on demonstrating the impact of youth work and on supporting the development of consistent high quality provision. These actions are inexorably linked to an action for the WLGA and local authorities namely supporting the implementation and maintenance of national evidence gathering systems.
- 6.2 One contributor to the evaluation noted that there is a tripod of actions related to measuring outcomes and thus demonstrating that the Youth Service is making a difference to young people. The tripod consists of audit, standards and MIS. In this way high quality provision is evidenced by the demonstration of impact; that is collated and recorded locally on evidence gathering systems and recorded nationally and disseminated through the audit. This section presents the evidence collected on those actions.

Implement measures to demonstrate impact

- 6.3 The Welsh Assembly Government were set an action to ‘further develop and implement consistent national and local measures to demonstrate the impact of youth work...’ by 2008. The action related in part to the development of the Demonstrating Success¹³ model work which is ongoing until January 2011. Some of the Principal Youth Officers interviewed had already been involved in the development of the Demonstrating Success tools, and one commented that ‘Demonstrating Success fine tuned our thinking’ (PYO).

¹³ Demonstrating Success is a new approach to measuring the progress and outcomes of children and young people in Wales being developed by the Welsh Assembly Government. It is based on a recognition that young people achieve far more through their involvement with programmes and policies than is measured by more traditional approaches that focus largely on assessment and attainment measures. The Demonstrating Success project is developing a set of indicators, tools and guidelines to measure the achievements and progress of young people in a range of settings, capturing changes in their social and emotional dispositions and skills (SEDS). For more information, see <http://demonstratingsuccess.co.uk/>

6.4 From April 2007 the Welsh Assembly Government were also tasked with developing a set of Key Performance Indicators and linked to that, to support the implementation and application of national standards from 2008. Progress in the early part of the strategy 's period was slow but there has been much momentum in 2009 and 2010 and there is currently a draft 'National Standards for the Youth Service in Wales' for the maintained Youth Service sector. This has been drafted in association with the sector and is in its final stages.

Support high quality provision

6.5 The Welsh Assembly Government were tasked with working with Estyn to support consistent high quality provision. Estyn inspect Youth Services as part of their inspections of the quality of wider youth support services and there is an ongoing working relationship with the Welsh Assembly Government.

6.6 More recently Estyn have published additional thematic reports, and within the past year have reported on Management information in local authority Youth Services, *Good features and shortcomings of local authority youth services* and *A survey of professional qualification training for youth workers in Wales*¹⁴. In the *Good features and shortcomings* report, Estyn report on how the Youth Service measures impact, but with a far greater focus in accreditation than in the Youth Service Strategy document. They note, for example, that two local authorities are,

making good use of a range of methods for accrediting young people's achievement and positive progress is being made in developing progression routes for accreditation. In another authority, most young people make good progress in developing their personal and social skills, but only a minority achieve accreditation for these skills.

6.7 This shift to a more thematic approach by the inspectorate is one that is welcomed by the team supporting the Youth Service at the Welsh Assembly Government and one that already helps shape and guide their

¹⁴ Estyn, 2009. *Good features and shortcomings of local authority youth services*. Cardiff: Estyn

activities. It is anticipated that in future the inspection arrangements, and arrangements by the Welsh Assembly Government team will be further refined with a stronger link between the new national standards and inspection.

Support the implementation and maintenance of national evidence gathering systems

LA 4

- 6.8 The drive towards improving quality and demonstrating impact cannot be solely centrally led, and the WLGA and local authorities were tasked with implementing evidence gathering systems by 2008. In practice, 'evidence gathering systems, translates into Management Information Systems (MIS) and there was a perception among some interviewees that implementing a common system was a historic missed opportunity due to lack of funding and a perceived lack of central direction. However it was apparent during consultations with PYOs that most authorities were developing or learning to use new systems. While this action was not completed by 2008 as set out in the Strategy, there has been much progress after that date.
- 6.9 The Estyn report entitled *Good features and shortcomings of the youth service for the period September 2007 to August 2009*¹⁵ noted that, data on outcomes for young people has not been fully developed and there has been limited use of data to inform more effective planning and service improvement.

In both that report and in a June 2009 thematic report on MIS¹⁶ it noted that 'most local authority youth services do not use robust management information systems (MIS)' and that this meant that planning and service improvement was 'hindered by the lack of information'. It found little common practice in the use of MIS although at the time of reporting in June 2009 Estyn found that there was an 'increasing use of two commercially available systems, "Quality Education Solutions Youth Services" and "Cognisoft Insight and Outreach"'.

¹⁵ Estyn, 2009. *Good features and shortcomings of local authority youth services*. Cardiff: Estyn

¹⁶ Estyn, 2009. *Management information in local authority youth services*. Cardiff: Estyn

- 6.10 During the past year there has been more activity against this action, and at the time of writing some nineteen of the 22 local authorities were using management information systems, with Quality Education Solutions (QES) being the most common. In addition to the Youth Service Strategy and the associated revenue grant which has been used to fund systems in some cases, there have been other drivers to the increasing use of MIS, including a climate of reporting against targets and indicators locally, the and the sharing of good practice across local authority areas as a part of a shift to more regional working. Although advice and guidance has been shared between some local authorities it is not the case that whole regions have adopted the same system, since a range of historical and financial factors played a role in the decisions.
- 6.11 Discussions with practitioners found that supporting the implementation of evidence gathering systems is particularly challenging in the voluntary sector and progress has been limited due to time and capacity. However in one case, we were informed of a local authority in south west Wales that had taken a lead in involving voluntary sector partners in the development of evidence gathering systems. Nevertheless, data relating to outcomes for young people through voluntary sector provision are 'largely guesstimates', according to one practitioner from that local authority.
- 6.12 The MIS systems currently used are still relatively new in most areas with many still at the testing or learning stage. It is therefore too early for evidence of the improvements in data gathering influencing provision and planning, however there are promising plans to involve the voluntary sector and make the link with school systems. The annual Youth Service Audit, led by the Welsh Assembly Government is also valuable in informing approaches to data collection by the Youth Service across Wales.

VS 4

Practitioners' perspectives

Practitioners' perspectives on measures to demonstrate impact

- 6.13 The broad issue of recognising and celebrating the impact of youth work on young people came up time and again in the consultations, often with an acknowledgement that 'we're not good at measuring progress' (PYO). At the local level youth workers were asked in the questionnaire survey whether they used methods to measure the progress made by young people. The majority (81%) reported that yes, they did use methods, while only 6% said No. The remainder did not know. A wide variety of methods were cited, in-house or evaluation forms by far the most commonly used.
- 6.14 The group discussion with the HE students also revealed that demonstrating impact was covered at this stage of the youth workers' careers. Demonstrating impact had been discussed in the course, and 'you've got to accept it. We know it's all about the big picture'. During their placements they had used tools such as the Rickter scale¹⁷ and distance travelled forms.

Figure 6: Word Cloud of methods most commonly used



Source: Arad survey of youth workers

¹⁷ The Rickter scale is an approach to assessment and evaluation which aims to measure soft outcomes and distance travelled by participants as a result of activities, programmes or other interventions.

6.15 There was not unanimous support for the increased focus on demonstrating impact across all the consultations:

'I don't believe we should use methods to measure young people's progress within youth work settings as this becomes a formal way of working. I strongly believe this has taken away the core values of what youth work once was!'
(Youth worker, survey response).

'They come to the club just wanting chill-out time' (Youth worker, survey response)

'I'm fed up with targets and accreditation. When I started it was about leisure and pleasure, that's gone. Some of the young people would like accreditation or Duke of Edinburgh awards, especially some of the older ones but we have lots of 11 -13 year olds. I think that's a conflict; we're saying "it's your time – but you should do a certificate"
(Youth worker).

6.16 This sentiment was echoed in some of the consultations, especially with voluntary sector organisations, although the majority of those interviewed acknowledged that they had to be able to prove that they were making a difference.

6.17 Several of the local authority Youth Services consulted demonstrated impact through accreditation. But in much the same way as there were concerns about too much of an emphasis on finding the impact, some consultees expressed a belief that there was too much emphasis on accreditation, especially driven by Estyn inspections and that there's a danger of alienating the young people, pushing them towards something they don't want to do (PYO).

6.18 Nevertheless, practitioners welcomed attempts to improve the quality of provision across the sector, and the role that the adoption of national standards for the Youth Service (see paragraphs 6.22 – 6.25) could potentially play in this process.

'We have inspections by Estyn on quality, but there is no benchmarking' (PYO).

'We're not accountable to anybody. Nobody has come out and asked. None [of the actions] are outcome driven. It's too nice and cosy, nobody is going to ask, "where are you compared to x, y or z?"' (PYO).

6.19 Other practitioners who contributed to the evaluation took a different view.

One noted:

The introduction of the Youth University to recognise the non-formal and informal learning that young people take part in has been a big step forward' (Youth Service Manager).

6.20 Others acknowledged the range of accreditation opportunities available to young people, noting their value in helping them to track their progress:

Young people are able to attain both formal and informal qualifications through the Youth Service ranging from NVQ, OCN to Children and Young People's University (Youth worker).

and

There are increased pathways open to young people to recognise the progress they make, which can enhance their aspirations and self-esteem. It is crucial that the Youth Service takes the lead in capturing this' (Principal Youth Officer).

Practitioners' perspectives on evidence gathering

6.21 Local Authorities were tasked with supporting the implementation and maintenance of national evidence gathering systems. All of the PYO's consulted were keen supporters of better evidence gathering and most were recent converts to new MIS systems. However, several explained that there was some reluctance from some staff members and that there was still some room for improvement. One PYO explained that there had been resistance from other colleagues in the authority to the investment in a new system, however the strategy has been a useful tool in making the case for a more standardised approach.

'We started in 2006 so predates this [Strategy]....but the [Strategy] supported what we considered to be our way of working, and evidence was part of that. This just gave us the ammunition. We could refer back to this at any time and say what we're doing – because it is a challenge, the MIS systems and collecting the data, and several people will say we should be out there with young people and we'd totally agree, but you have to prove your worth and reflect and improve the service' (PYO).

'Good at a very local level, so they can see themselves how well they're performing' (youth worker).

Practitioners' perspectives on national standards for the Youth Service in Wales

6.22 The development of the national standards had progressed during the past year and there was unanimous support and an enthusiastic welcome from the PYOs consulted. They were described as 'long-overdue' and 'absolutely essential' and some of the standards are already in use locally, used as benchmarks for their contracts with voluntary sector grant recipients or as a framework for internal planning.

VS 3

6.23 Some reservations were expressed however by both those in the maintained and voluntary sector about how the standards will work in the voluntary sector. One voluntary sector respondent explained, 'the standards are for the maintained sector – they don't apply to us in the voluntary sector'. There was an acknowledgement that more work was needed to resolve how the standards would relate to Youth Service activities delivered by the voluntary sector. However most respondents considered that national standards should apply to the voluntary sector and that these, where possible, should not diverge from those set for the maintained sector Youth Service.

'Another area we're looking at is our 'reach'. We think that we're reaching a large number of the young population, but I don't think we're hitting the numbers of young people that are proposed in the Strategy. So we're looking at that' (PYO).

'It all depends on how you apply the standards and how far do you include some of the others. This business about how we can claim as a direct or influencing role is difficult. Make sure we're comparing like with like' (PYO).

'One standard talks about extending the reach to 25% of the population, and I feel that some of those are visionary and will be extremely hard for us to achieve, but as long as there is an understanding from the powers to be that we are working towards them then that's fine' (PYO).

'We're committed to the standards but whether we will achieve them all is another thing, We can probably achieve them through working in partnership with other organisations and if that is acceptable then that's fine' (PYO)

'We're writing the national standards at the moment; one figure is 90% qualified.. It gives us something to aim for. How it's going to be collated across sectors I don't know, and by when, what qualifications - there are too many open ended to give it credence. You

can only ask not tell if they're not funded centrally' (PYO).

- 6.24 There was also a request for clearer guidance and definitions and also an acknowledgment that standards are merely the starting point providing a framework for local activity, and 'local strategies need to flesh these standards out and be meaningful within local circumstances' (PYO).
- 6.25 Several PYOs cited the example of the public library service in Wales as an example of where the introduction of standards and performance indicators had been proven to have improved quality. The Welsh Public Library Standards were introduced in 2002 and their aims were to raise the quality and standard of public library services for the people of Wales. They provide a management support mechanism which should encourage and develop service standards, assess public reaction and define effectiveness and efficiency more precisely. The service is currently in its third round. The anecdotal evidence provided by the PYOs is supported by evidence from the sector:

'There can be very little doubt that Standards provide a valuable management tool, and an essential device for measuring service improvement in public libraries in Wales. Service improvements are already apparent in the achievements to date, and the Welsh Assembly Government was fully justified in introducing a second, enhanced set of Standards for the period 2005/08. The people of Wales already enjoy improved public library services, and there is now greater consistency in terms of what is offered, whilst it has been possible to retain and respect the integrity of the work of local public library authorities'.

Source: The Welsh Public Library Standards 2002/05 An overall Analysis

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/090106wpls2002-05analysisen.pdf>

(Report prepared by CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (a division of the Welsh Assembly Government) based on the first three years of library authorities' annual reports against the then new Standards.)

Young People's perspectives

- 6.26 In many areas, young people were very happy with the services they received and during the workshop exercise where the activities available to them in their clubs were discussed; there was a high degree of satisfaction with what was on offer to them.

- 6.27 In more general terms some of the young people explained that they got a lot out of attending, 'it's empowering and there's free food and music' and it is clear that any measures of quality and impact must take account of the fact that a large number of young people only want to attend the youth club just for 'chilling' however there is an opportunity for advice and support as and when a need arises.

'you can talk to someone if you have family problems'
(Young person, voluntary sector youth club, Pembroke)

'A while ago I was picked on at school and [youth worker] gave me loads of advice' (Young person, voluntary sector youth club, Pembroke)

- 6.28 Some of the involvement will be clear to measure: 'lots of people get involved in the projects, the animation project, the music project' while the opportunity to meet friends, to get out of the house is a far less tangible impact although 'without this place there'd be nothing, it would be crap down here without [the club], rubbish'.

Summary conclusions on relevant actions

- 6.29 The Strategy's actions for the Welsh Assembly Government to demonstrate the impact of youth work on young people was built on a long-standing awareness of the need to provide evidence for the sector's many achievements. Evidence from the practitioners revealed that a range of tools were already in use to demonstrate impact, and that a number of the practitioners had been involved in the piloting of Demonstrating Success. In consultation with practitioners from the sector it was clear that they perceived demonstrating impact and supporting high quality provision to be linked to the implementation and application of national standards for youth work. It was reported that progress on these standards had been slow in the early days of the strategy however much work had been carried out on the standards during 2008/09. There was unanimous support for their implementation from practitioners.
- 6.30 The implementation of evidence gathering systems will support both the demonstration of impact and the roll-out of the standards. This action was

set for the WLGA and local authorities by 2008 but wasn't achieved by this date; indeed Estyn reported in 2009¹⁸ that most local authorities did not use robust management information systems. However, by the time of the research for this evaluation report, there had been much progress against this action, with several of the local authorities having invested some of their grant funds in new systems. The vast majority are now using (or learning to use) management information systems and this will contribute to better planning and further benchmarking of performance and provision. The maintenance of such systems should continue to be supported by the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that there is compatibility between the different systems in use, and to ensure that the data being collected is fit for purpose, especially in advance of the national standards coming into use. The balance of opinion among practitioners suggests that local authorities should meanwhile work with their voluntary sector and education partners to ensure that appropriate evidence is gathered in the most effective manner cross their areas.

¹⁸ Estyn, 2009. *Management information in local authority youth services*. Cardiff: Estyn

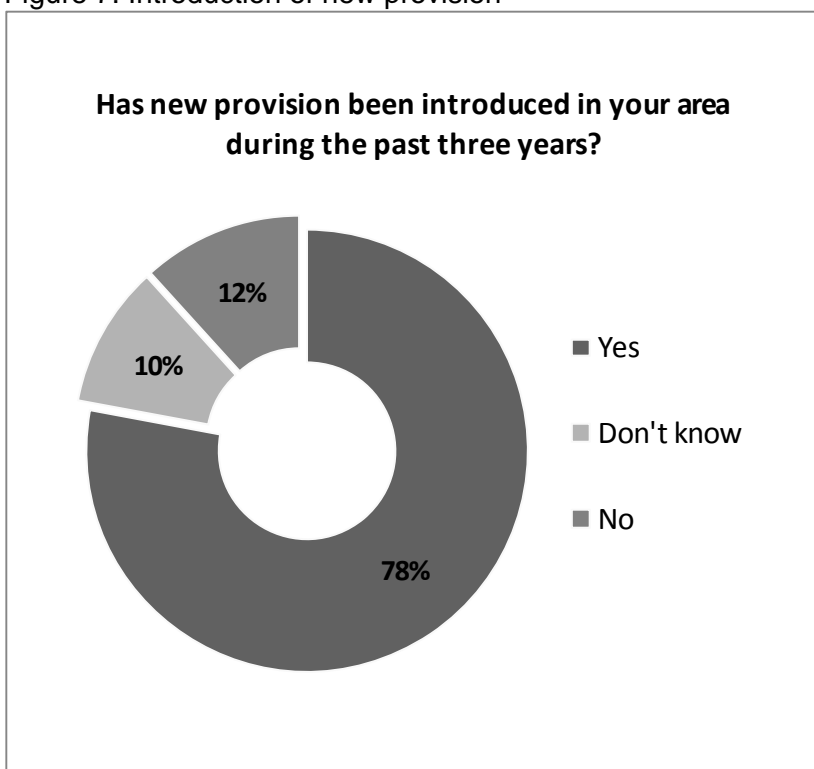
7 Structure and organisation of local provision

- 7.1 One objective included in the National Youth Service Strategy was that the WLGA and local authorities should review the current structure and organisation of provision in order to ensure that provision for young people is fit for purpose. While recognising the core principle of voluntary engagement – that young people choose whether or not to engage in activities – the Strategy also emphasised the need for the Youth Service to be, (LA 2)
- pro-active in involving hard to reach young people wherever they are and whatever their circumstances by offering appropriate provision, support and activities.
- 7.2 This section assesses any changes in the nature and structure of Youth Service provision during the lifetime of the Strategy.

Introduction of new provision

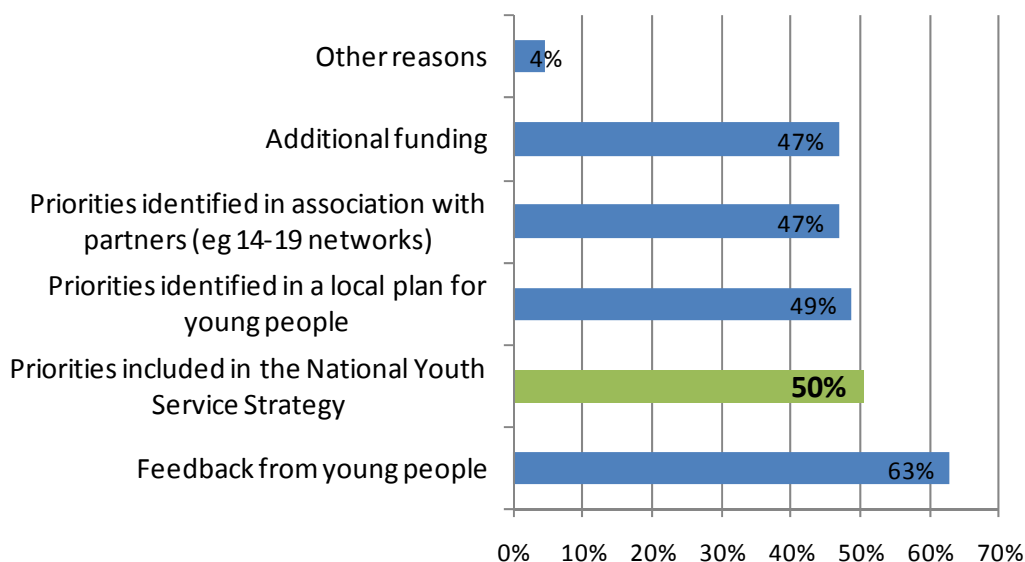
- 7.3 Over three-quarters (78%) of the youth workers who completed the evaluation questionnaire reported that new provision had been introduced in their local area during the past three years. Of these, 50% answered that new provision had been introduced as a result of priorities included in the National Youth Service Strategy. While this is encouraging in terms of indicating the reach and impact of the Strategy at a local level, similar proportions of practitioners cited other factors which had influenced the introduction of new provision, including additional funding, local plans and, crucially, feedback from young people. This is a clear indication that new provision is driven by a number of different issues.

Figure 7: Introduction of new provision



Source: Arad survey of youth workers

Figure 8: Factors that influenced the introduction of new provision



Reviewing provision locally

7.4 Youth service provision has been reviewed in a large number of local authorities during the past three years. These reviews have taken place on

different scales and have resulted in a range of different models and structures for managing the Youth Service at a local level.

- 7.5 One local authority has seen a complete overhaul of the Youth Service during the past two years, presenting an opportunity to look afresh at the balance between centre-based and outreach provision, at planning systems and how the Youth Service collaborates with schools. The Principal Youth Officer in the authority in question explained that the restructuring did not occur as a result of the Youth Service Strategy. However the Strategy provided a useful guide when it came to reviewing priorities and planning provision:

How would I summarise the impact of the Strategy: change was already planned but it probably helped shape the direction of change and placed an emphasis on particular themes and activities (PYO).

- 7.6 Discussions with PYOs revealed that local Youth Services are at different stages of developing local Youth Service strategies. In some cases, as in the authority mentioned above, plans were already in development and the Strategy provided some direction and reassurance regarding the overall 'direction of travel'. In other authorities, however, the evaluation team heard that the Strategy had indeed been a catalyst to review provision.

- 7.7 One PYO, who was relatively new in post, explained that the National Strategy had been used to steer a review of local provision:

We're in the process of a top-to-tail review of provision, looking at how we consult with young people, how we ensure provision reflects need, how we work in partnership more smartly – the Strategy has set the agenda for us in many ways (PYO).

What new provision has been introduced?

- 7.8 Practitioners provided a wide range of examples of new provision that has been introduced over the past three years, both in questionnaire responses and during interviews. Despite the diversity of new provision introduced, there were a number of over-arching trends that became particularly apparent during the study.

*Detached and outreach provision*¹⁹

7.9 Firstly, throughout Wales the Youth Service appears to have increased the amount of detached youth work being delivered. Many PYOs reported that detached teams have expanded, providing wider coverage across local authority areas. It was also notable that new detached provision was introduced following analysis of where additional support was needed in a number of areas. PYOs recognise the need to engage with young people who do not participate in centre-based activities:

Outreach provision is now being delivered at a wider range of locations – where it is needed most (Youth worker).

7.10 Youth workers recognise that taking provision out to those places where young people congregate has the potential to bring benefits to young people and the wider community.

There is a growing recognition that we need to have a presence where people meet informally. Hanging out with young people can contribute to preventing anti-social behaviour and engage with young people before they enter into dangerous behaviour or situations (Youth worker).

Mobile youth work

7.11 Linked to this, the Youth Service has introduced a greater range of mobile provision to develop youth work in many places where centre-based provision has not historically been in place. Again, interviews with Principal Youth Officers found that much of this new provision was in response to demand or gaps in provision that had been identified as part of internal review processes.

7.12 Recently established mobile youth services include a wide range of provision. Funding had been used to purchase information buses, introducing services in isolated parts of local authorities. One youth worker described their mobile unit as ‘a youth centre on wheels!’

¹⁹ We have used the term ‘detached and outreach’ youth work in order to be consistent with the terminology used by the Youth Strategy Branch. This covers engagement with young people who do not participate in centre-based activities.

It enables us to deliver information services, advice and counselling. It's eye catching and something different. There's no doubt that it has allowed us to engage with young people we have not had contact with before' (Youth worker).

Many youth workers talked about mobile provision providing access to new communities that had been identified as being in need of support. It was viewed as a means of promoting equality of opportunity, enabling the Youth Service to deliver services to young people, who have basically been neglected – those in rural areas and also young people who are identified as being NEETs.

Flexibility of youth work methods and settings

7.13 The approaches above illustrate a tendency towards more flexible approaches to addressing identified need. The Youth Service has developed more sophisticated approaches to consulting with young people and understanding their needs. During the lifetime of the National Youth Service Strategy, there is evidence that a wider range of youth methodologies are being employed to ensure to respond to need.

Examples provided include:

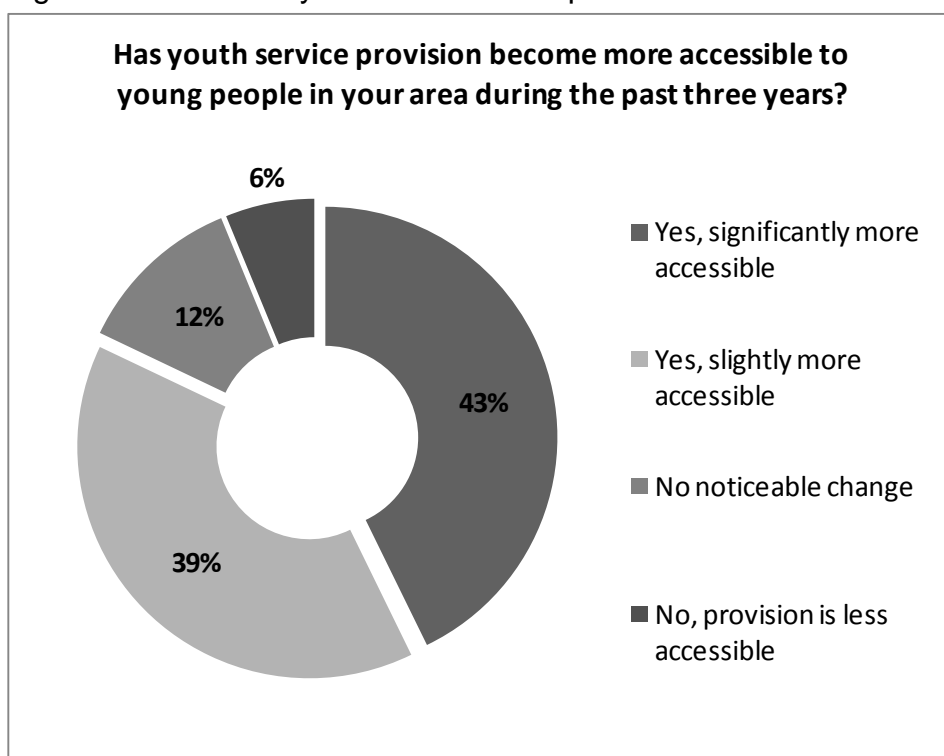
- new youth worker posts focusing on particular topics or target groups (e.g. healthy lifestyle activities; drug and alcohol programmes);
- partnership with community schools to introduce new provision (including out of school-term programmes and residential activities);
- an increased range of bilingual provision;
- hospital-based youth work;
- new posts and targeted provision for Looked After Children;
- new international youth work activities, opening up new opportunities and experiences;
- provision aimed at supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people; and
- extending opening times at youth centres.

- 7.14 The above represents only a snapshot of the new provision that youth workers reported. Large numbers referred to the significant expansion in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Throughout Wales, practitioners underlined the value of the programme in engaging with young people:
- We have introduced the DofE to youth centres. 10 new [Duke of Edinburgh] groups have been set up in the last 3 years, with 100% increase in participation (Youth worker).
- 7.15 A number of youth workers also commented on increases in Welsh language provision. In some areas, the Youth Service created good partnerships with Welsh medium schools and voluntary sector organisations, building on opportunities presented by European funding programmes:
- We now have a youth worker based in all Welsh medium secondary schools in the authority, providing activities through the medium of Welsh (Youth work manager).
- 7.16 The consensus among practitioners and Youth Service managers is that the focus of youth work has certainly shifted towards more community-based provision that seeks to respond to identified need. Many authorities have restructured their service in a way that allows them to be more flexible and responsive. Practitioners in many areas were keen to point out that challenges remain.
- 7.17 Sustainability is an ongoing challenge for many. Examples were provided of new provision being introduced and subsequently withdrawn within the space of twelve months, due to pressures on resources.
- In our area, an inclusion project run in partnership by the Youth Service and a local high school had to be abandoned, despite good levels of participation. This was because our access to targeted funding ceased, along with a reduction in school budgets.
- 7.18 With funding pressures likely to become increasingly acute in the coming years, sustaining provision will remain a challenge.

Accessibility of provision

- 7.19 The questionnaire circulated to youth workers asked them whether, in their view, provision had become more accessible during the past three years. 43% responded that provision had become significantly more accessible for young people; a further 39% stated services had become slightly more accessible to young people, while only a small minority (6%) considered that provision had become less accessible.
- 7.20 During visits to projects and initiatives a number of youth workers reiterated the point that the introduction of a wider range of activities – as described in the previous section – had served to extend opportunities for young people to participate.

Figure 9: Accessibility of Youth Service provision



Source: Arad survey of youth workers

- 7.21 The data in figure 9, above, should be seen in the context of additional qualitative comments provided by practitioners and managers across the Youth Service.
- 7.22 Respondents noted that there had been improvements to services in rural areas, including more outreach and mobile youth work provision. A number

of practitioners consider that the Youth Service has been more proactive in taking provision to young people, thereby making services more accessible, for example ' more services available and brought to young people in rural areas' (Youth worker).

- 7.23 Another youth worker explained that services in Powys had been enhanced by a 'peripatetic activity programme delivered throughout the county'. In addition to making provision more accessible to young people in rural areas, local authorities are working to extend opportunities for particular cohorts, including those who have traditionally not accessed Youth Service provision:

a Youth mobile unit has been purchased and will be operational within the next month. This unit will be delivering services to young people in rural areas and also young people who are defined as being NEET (Youth worker).

- 7.24 In addition, new provision targeting children and young people from a care background has been developed by dedicated Looked After Children officers.

- 7.25 More flexible opening times have also served to make provision more accessible in a number of local authority areas. Practitioners noted that additional Friday night and holiday provision has been introduced, including half-term provision where previously this was not delivered.

- 7.26 New developments in some areas have also led to Welsh language provision becoming more accessible.

New clubs have opened up in Fishguard and Tenby with the aim for young people to socialise and participate in activities either through the medium of Welsh or to promote the use of the language. (Youth worker)

- 7.27 One youth worker, working with one of the Mentrau Iaith in south east Wales explained that partnership working with the local authority had improved access to Welsh language activities:

The Sbardun pilot project – which was in operation in only one Welsh medium secondary school in the area – has been rolled out across all Welsh medium secondary schools in the authority. As part of this we

have a youth worker based in each school, providing access to high quality services through the medium of Welsh, (Youth worker).

Views of young people: accessibility and structure of local provision

- 7.28 It was important to test this view with young people and to gain their perspectives on whether provision was more accessible to them.
- 7.29 One group of young people in south east Wales who regularly visit their local youth club agreed that the provision was accessible to them. They felt that plenty of opportunities existed locally to take part in a range of Youth Service provision:
- There's the club here, which opens more times during the week than it used to. Not only that, but there's more of a choice of different activities to take part in. They've also put on things – like dance classes – which we had asked for (Young person aged 14, south east Wales).
- 7.30 This group explained that there are still large numbers of young people in their community who do not access Youth Service provision, but that this is because they choose not to, rather than because opportunities are not open to them.
- 7.31 In more rural west Wales a group of young people expressed a different view. They were not satisfied with the opportunities available to them and there was a general wish for greater choice and for activities to be closer to home. During a group discussion, young people wanted extended opening hours although they accepted that 'we have to work around the times [the youth worker] can deliver footy'.
- 7.32 One problem reported by the young people was that of space and facilities with all of the activities having to take place in one room or in an area shared with a primary school. One girl complained about lack of planning, and that the spending seemed to be on the small stuff, on 'ad hoc bits of equipment rather than on big changes that make a real difference'. These comments tie in closely with the comments about funding, and the perception held by young people (and shared by many of the youth workers consulted) that there was funding available for ad hoc projects or equipment, but not enough funding to make the necessary improvements to

their buildings. However, these comments should be considered in the context of evidence of new provision developed during the lifetime of the Strategy, as listed in paragraphs 7.8 – 7.17.

- 7.33 Other clubs visited appeared to have plenty of equipment, though not necessarily the correct materials. Mention was made of a cupboard full of board games that are never used, and another explaining, ‘we’ve got too much stuff’ as they’d inherited equipment from another club which had closed.
- 7.34 There were some complaints from young people with regards to sharing information and the planning of sessions, and although these complaints were minor they may possibly show that there is still some way to go in these areas. For example, one young person mentioned that the lack of information was still a problem: she explained that the Youth Service used the school to let people know about what’s on, but that,
there’s loads of stuff in the leisure centre on after school, but few people know about it, nothing through school, but it’s just opposite. More generally, there was also a perception held by a small number of the young people that ‘there’s no plan to everything we do every week’.
- 7.35 Overall, young people were broadly satisfied with the provision on offer to them and recognised some improvements to the Youth Service.

‘It’s gone way more fun, they understand what we want’ (Young person, Neath Port Talbot).

‘Things have improved round here – there’s definitely more on offer. It’s not for everybody but then you’re never going to get everybody coming along to [the youth club]’ (Young person, Rhondda Cynon Taf).

Local Youth Service Strategies

- 7.36 Although not a specific objective included in the National Strategy, many local authorities have developed local Youth Service strategies. Where they have been formulated these strategies cover fixed periods of time (usually 2-3 years) and some have been influenced by the broad themes and priorities set out in the National Strategy. Local Youth Services recognise

the need to continually review provision and identify how it contributes to the broad national policy landscape. Key features of the effective strategies reviewed include:

- input by young people during the production of the strategy;
- a frank assessment of current strengths and weaknesses in terms of local Youth Service provision;
- a clearly defined and articulated vision for the Youth Service locally;
- the translation of this broad vision for the Youth Service into specific objectives and SMART targets / performance indicators;
- an emphasis on a multi-agency approach and strong partnership between statutory and voluntary sector youth provision; and
- a recognition of the need to apply a range of different youth work methodologies that respond to local need.

7.37 There was a consensus among Youth Service managers that all local authorities should work towards developing local Youth Service strategies that provide a solid basis for the planning and delivery of local provision, incorporating the features listed above. There should also be strong strategic or thematic links to a revised National Strategy, it was argued. This does not prevent individual authorities from adopting flexible and tailored approaches to reflect particular local circumstances. One PYO in south east Wales explained:

There is a national policy framework that our local strategy fits within, however it is very much rooted in local circumstances. For example, one of the key themes in our strategy is employability – from the input of local people into the strategy, we know that this is a key concern for local people and they're looking to the Youth Service to help improve employability skills.

7.38 The draft national standards for the Youth Service in Wales recognise the need for local strategic and operational plans that demonstrate how, at a local level, the authority intends to deliver the vision and aims set out in the National Youth Service Strategy.

Summary conclusions on this section

- 7.39 Local authorities across Wales have reviewed the structure and organisation of Youth Service provision during the lifetime of the National Strategy. Youth workers reported that opportunities for young people to take part in activities have been extended, with a particular focus on greater outreach and detached provision. The Youth Service carries out assessments of need systematically and the information collected informs the way in which provision is planned and delivered.
- 7.40 Increasingly, local authorities are producing local Youth Service strategies which provide a robust local framework for the delivery of the Youth Service and, in many cases, reflect overarching national objectives and priorities.
- 7.41 Young people generally recognise that there is now greater choice of provision and better opportunities to engage in the Youth Service. However, some remain frustrated about the lack of local provision and the quality of resources and facilities.
- 7.42 While many of the positive developments referred to in this section related to specific objectives included in the National Strategy it is difficult to isolate the precise impact that the Strategy itself has had. A number of local authorities reported that reviews and reorganisation processes had been 'in the pipeline' prior to the Strategy's publication. As such, the document largely confirmed what was already in progress. Others valued the guidance provided by the Strategy as they undertook reviews of provision.
- 7.43 In terms of the structure and organisation of Youth Service provision, therefore, the National Strategy has provided a strategic reminder of the need to continually review provision and respond to need, rather than serve as a catalyst for change.

8 Young people's engagement in decision making

- 8.1 The National Youth Service Strategy charged local authorities and the voluntary sector with playing a leading role in engaging young people in making decisions, planning and reviewing actions on all matters that affect them. This section summarises the evidence and data collected during the evaluation that relates to this aspect of the Strategy's action plan

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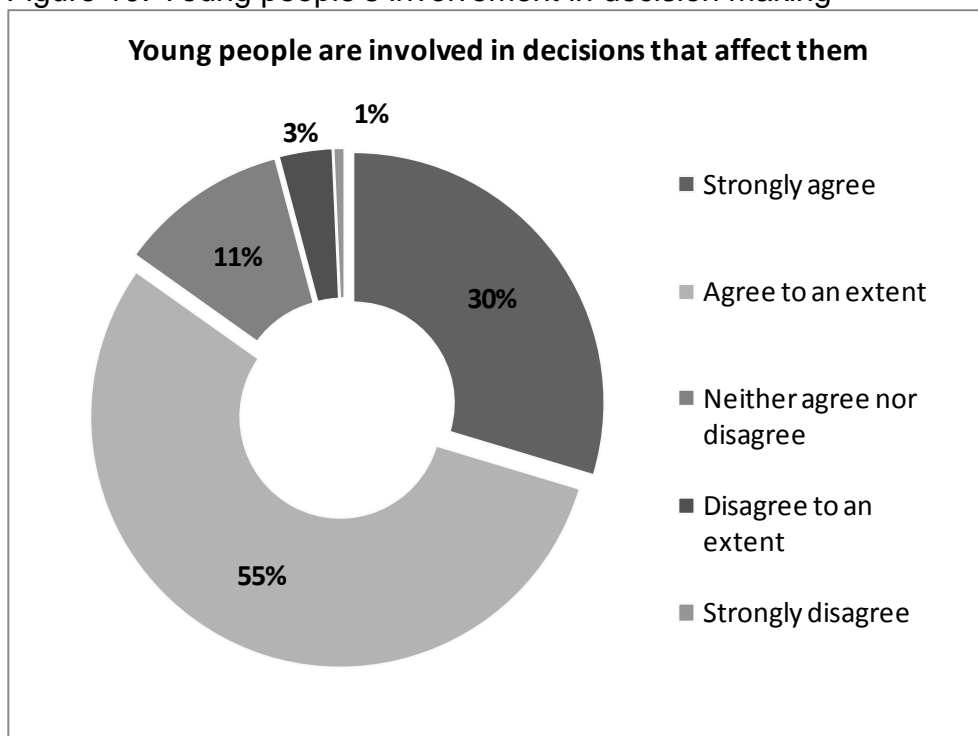
Background

- 8.2 Prior to the publication of the National Youth Service Strategy, successive policy documents and strategies had underlined the importance of ensuring that young people have a voice in shaping the youth work services provided for them and are able to influence wider policy developments that impact upon them.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 The National Youth Service Strategy was, therefore, informed by a number of developments that had enshrined the importance of engaging young people in decision-making and planning processes. Section LA3 of the Strategy further emphasised the need for local authorities to involve young people in relevant appointments, consultations, audit and procurement processes. It described a number of other specific actions for local authorities: the maintained Youth Service was charged with:
- producing young people friendly versions of relevant documents in collaboration with young people;
 - supporting collaboration with Funky Dragon, Youth Forums and School Councils to enhance the network of participation opportunities for young people throughout Wales; and
 - achieving the participation quality mark as identified within the national standards for Children and Young People's Participation.

Evidence relating to this action

- 8.5 Principal Youth Officers reported that they ‘routinely’ and ‘systematically’ consult with young people and involve them in the planning of services delivered to them. The evaluation heard a number of examples of large scale surveys and consultation processes led by the Youth Service that had subsequently fed into the design of services and interventions for young people. Involving young people in decision making is built into local Youth Service strategies in many areas.
- 8.6 The majority of practitioners interviewed from both the maintained and voluntary sectors remarked that engaging young people in making decisions, planning and reviewing actions was a particular strength of the Youth Service and an action which took place almost as a matter of course, as something ‘we always do’.
- 8.7 Survey data collected during the evaluation supports this, with 85% of practitioners agreeing that young people are involved in decisions that affect them (see figure 10, below).

Figure 10: Young people’s involvement in decision making



Source: Arad survey of youth workers

8.8 There is also evidence that this participative approach filters down to individual projects and youth centres; this indicates that engaging young people in decision making processes now happens regularly at all levels of Youth Service provision:

We have seen the active participation of young people in the direction and delivery of provision through youth bank and increased levels of youth forum activity, both locally and nationally. The appointment of a dedicated participation officer has also contributed (Youth worker).

A wide range of examples were provided by youth workers during interviews and visits:

- young people have sat on interview panels when appointing senior Youth Service posts;
- through their involvement in the development of local authority Youth Service strategies, young people have identified particular themes for inclusion in (e.g. in Merthyr Tydfil the local strategy includes a strong focus on employability, which the PYO reported 'came from young people');
- the development of the youth inspectors project training young people as 'inspectors' with the intention that they will feed into the self-assessment process (e.g. in Neath Port Talbot);
- the Swansea Youth Bank, a youth-led grant giving panel that provides grants of up to £2000 for fully youth-led projects for young people to take action in their own communities; and
- youth forums have long been established in most of the local authorities consulted, which are reported to have had a positive impact and provide links to Funky Dragon and wider networks.

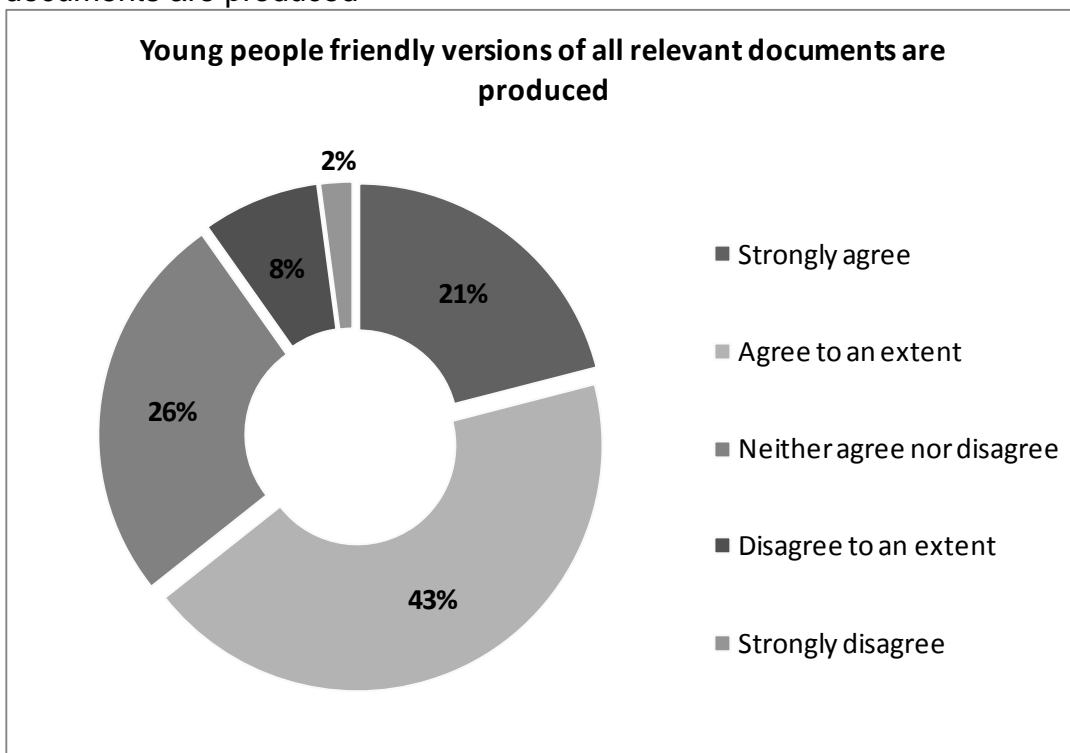
8.9 Some practitioners, however, expressed a degree of unease regarding efforts to increase participation and engagement, noting concerns that those young people involved often do not represent or reflect the views of the majority:

Youth forums do help some young people to influence decisions that affect them, however involvement is needed from a wider cross section of society (Youth worker).

- 8.10 The National Youth Service Strategy required local authorities to play a 'leading role' in engaging young people in decision-making processes. There is evidence that the maintained Youth Service is indeed at the forefront of efforts to promote a participative approach, even though, as one practitioner noted, this agenda is being promoted by 'many different agencies and from many different angles'.
- 8.11 What is less clear is to what extent these activities are directly attributable to the Strategy. In some local authority areas, the actions linked to promoting the participation of young people were set out in plans which predate the strategy. In other local authority areas, PYOs and youth workers noted that they considered that the strategy reinforced or underlined the importance of efforts and actions that were already being delivered.
- 8.12 Practitioners were also asked whether, in their experience, young people-friendly versions of documents are produced. 64% of respondents agreed (21% strongly) that relevant documents are prepared in a format that is accessible to young people (see figure 11, below).
- 8.13 The Welsh Assembly Government was also tasked to 'lead by example in the participation of young people in policy development'. Much good work was in place before the Strategy with regards to promoting the opportunities for the participation of young people, and the Youth Service branch has continued the good practice of involving young people in appointments, producing young people friendly documents (including for the Strategy itself) and enhancing participation opportunities. However there remain some practical problems at times in ensuring the participation of young people as often as desired.

WAG 5

Figure 11: Practitioners' views on whether young people friendly versions of documents are produced



Source: Arad survey of youth workers

Young people's perspectives

8.14 Young people consulted as part of this evaluation believed that they were able to play a role in decisions that affected them and that their views were being taken into account. It should be noted however that by contacting young people through the Youth Service, we collected views from those who were already engaged in Youth Service provision in one form or another.

Yes, they do ask us. They ask every week what we want to do [in youth club] (Young Person, Neath Port Talbot).

We have a choice, anytime, anything we want – we just tell them don't we and it happens, if they can (Young Person, Pembrokeshire).

While many of the examples of participation cited by the young people were consultations or surveys, some involved a higher degree of involvement in decision making,

The youth worker asked a group of us [young people] to carry out a survey of people who come to the club to see what new activities they wanted to do in the evenings. One of the things people mentioned was dance classes – so they arranged this for us. We got quite a few new people coming along (Young person, Rhondda Cynon Taff).

- 8.15 The frustrations expressed with regard to participation tended to be linked to other issues, such as funding or transport rather than lack of participation as such. For example one group explained that they would like more space for activities in their youth club, however they acknowledged the funding constraints involved.
- 8.16 Interestingly, not all young people consulted enjoyed or appreciated being engaged in decision making. At one event convened to inform the process of rewriting the local Youth Service strategy attended by the evaluation team, a minority of the young people complained that ‘it’s boring’, or ‘they put words in your mouth’ (Young person, Merthyr Tydfil,).
- 8.17 Other young people who take part in their local youth forum appreciated the opportunity, but noted that many of their peers were simply not interested in taking part, ‘People don’t take up the offer, maybe it’s not that interesting for the older ones’ (Anglesey youth forum member).

Summary conclusion on young people’s engagement in decision making

- 8.18 Objectives relating this action have been achieved but many other factors (and strategies) play a significant part; as a result, identifying to what extent progress in this area can be attributed to the Strategy is problematic. One possible way of framing participation is by means of a ladder from non-participation to full participation. Several commentators have modelled participation in this way, and the degree to which children and young people participate in decision making processes can also be mapped against such steps or rungs of a participation ladder. The table below is adapted from Roger Hart’s Ladder of Participation²⁰ and the steps can provide a helpful tool in framing some evaluation questions.

²⁰ Hart, Roger A., Children’s Participation: From tokenism to citizenship, UNICEF International Child Development Centre (now Innocenti Research Centre), Florence, 1992. Available online at http://web.gc.cuny.edu/che/ceerg/documents/childrens_participation.pdf

Table 6: Hart’s Ladder of Participation (adapted from Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship, Unicef 1992)

		Rungs of the Ladder
Participation	8 (top)	Children and young people initiated Shared decision with adults
	7	Children and young people initiated and directed
	6	Adult-initiated, shared decisions with Children
	5	Consulted but informed
	4	Assigned but informed
Non- participation	3	Tokenism
	2	Decoration
	1	Manipulation

8.19 It is however difficult to match activities linked to the National Youth Strategy to individual rungs. If we look at the example of the youth strategy team at the Welsh Assembly Government, there are examples of strong participation, with a large number of activities at level 6 (adult initiated, shared decisions). However at times due to time or other constraints, the involvement of young people would be described as ‘non-participation’, especially outside of the team’s work but in policy areas which nevertheless affect the lives of young people. Likewise in the voluntary and maintained Youth Service there are examples of participation which could be placed at level 7, such as the youth initiated survey and youth bank funded projects (paragraph 8.7) although this is not the case across all organisations nor across all activities within one organisation.

8.20 Evidence indicates that local authorities have made significant progress towards engaging young people in making decisions on matters that affect them during the past 3-4 years. The National Youth Service Strategy further underlined the importance of this, however many actions were already in place or in planning.

9 Youth work training in higher education

Context and strategic aims

HE 1-4

- 9.1 A range of professional courses in youth and community work is provided at five higher education institutions in Wales²¹. These include a diploma, foundation degree, honours degree and postgraduate diploma. The professional qualification for youth workers is currently diploma level (level 5) however from September 2010 this will rise to degree level, affording a higher status to youth work as a profession, according to a number of HE representatives who contributed to the evaluation.
- 9.2 Across the HE sector in Wales, there are over 600 people enrolled on youth and community work courses. Many of these students (over 200) are funded by the Youth Service (through grant funding provided by the Welsh Assembly Government). All Youth Services fund places at HE institutions, although the numbers from each authority vary considerably. In addition, Swansea Youth Service provides training opportunities for youth workers through its Glyndŵr University franchise.
- 9.3 The National Strategy set a number of specific actions for the higher education sector, including: working in partnership with the Youth Service, regional planning networks and the Welsh Assembly Government. These actions include:
- expand the number of places available for training of youth workers at all levels;
 - evaluate current programmes to ensure they meet the needs and aspirations for the Youth Service in Wales and offer best fit with locally delivered training to secure progression for students; and
 - work in partnership with regional planning arrangements, the Youth Service and the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure a continuum of high quality provision for those pursuing youth work qualifications.

²¹ The Welsh HEIs that offer qualifications in youth work are Glyndŵr University, UWIC/Cardiff Metropolitan University, University of Wales Newport, Trinity College, Carmarthen and the Open University in Wales.

Expanding provision

9.4 Institutions reported healthy increases in numbers applying for and enrolling on youth and community work courses during the past three years. One institution noted that numbers for the current academic year were more than double those at the time when the Youth Service Strategy was published. Other institutions had also seen sustained increases in take up. There has been a change in the age profile of those embarking on youth work courses in recent years, with many younger and less experienced youth workers choosing to follow courses.

9.5 Respondents cited many reasons for these trends:

I think that the [youth and community work] course's popularity just reflects the tendency towards greater levels of qualification across the youth workforce.

This was supported by a lecturer in another institution who noted that the increases seen at his institution are not a result of greater marketing activity.

We haven't changed how we promote ourselves but the demand is there – particularly among younger age groups who are often newer to youth work. It just seems that demand has increased as the status of youth work as a profession is becoming greater.

9.6 One respondent felt that current youth work students were a 'noticeably different constituency' to the student cohort encountered in previous years, noting that the age profile of youth work students had become progressively younger and that fewer people who enrol on courses have previous experience of working in a youth work setting.

9.7 HE programme managers welcomed the increased interest in youth work courses, which they feel reflects a more positive perception across society about youth work as a career choice. It is felt that the shift to degree level professional qualifications from September 2010 may result in yet greater levels of interest.

Reviewing youth work programmes

- 9.8 Institutions have reviewed and restructured courses to reflect these changes. This has provided an opportunity to work with employers (particularly the Youth Service) in order to ensure that the programmes delivered meet their needs.
- 9.9 The evaluation found some examples of good joint working between HEIs and Principal Youth Officers. One PYO in north Wales is a member of the Youth and Community Work Programme Board at their local HEI and has been closely consulted on the design and development of the new course being rolled out from September 2010. Another institution in south Wales has an expert panel consisting of PYOs, training officers and service users who inform course content and have been involved in a recent review process.
- 9.10 However there remain concerns about the quality of links between HEIs and PYOs and whether current programmes are succeeding in producing the high quality graduates required to deliver the vision and goals set out in the National Strategy:
- The Youth Service is changing rapidly – we're not seeing these changes reflected in the youth work training curriculum. The Assembly and the Youth Service needs to articulate more clearly to providers exactly what is required (HE representative).
- 9.11 This view echoes the findings of a recent Estyn report²² into training for youth workers in Wales. It noted that the Youth Service Strategy provides a very good strategic basis for the collaborative development of youth worker training. However, key stakeholders have done little so far to address these objectives. There is a lack of leadership and shared vision to drive forward joint working.

Views of youth work students

- 9.12 The views of youth work students were collected during a visit and focus group session with a group at one HEI in south Wales. The students, in

²² Estyn, *A survey of professional qualification training for youth workers in Wales* (2010)

their third and final year of study, were asked their views on the structure and content of their course and whether they feel they had been given the opportunity to develop appropriate skills.

- 9.13 Many of the students wanted more practical dimensions to the programme. They would have liked the course to have covered 'the practical stuff like managing budgets and making bids for funding' This was seen as a central part of youth work. One of those enrolled on the course had been asked about experience of completing funding applications at a job interview and felt that the course hadn't equipped her well enough.
- 9.14 Students provided other examples of practical activities that they felt would benefit them, including a focus on how to carry out risk assessments and approaches to project and programme planning. In many cases, the examples provided were tasks that they had been asked to carry out during work placements.
- 9.15 This raises interesting questions about the function and purpose of youth work provision at HE level. One lecturer referred to an emerging tension between providing training for the workplace and providing an academic and theoretical grounding in youth work as a profession. Indeed several students during the focus group discussion considered the course to be too preoccupied with theory, at the expense of 'teaching us how to tackle issues'. Others recognised that the course aims to strike a balance between theory and practice.
- 9.16 A recent graduate interviewed during the evaluation offered another perspective. He suggested that it was unrealistic to expect a university course to produce youth workers with all the skills needed. Delivering youth work in some challenging settings – including detached youth work – requires highly developed skills that develop over time, often over years of experience, he maintained:

The key thing is for a course to provide a grounding in youth work theory and to encourage students to be able to reflect critically in different settings. Placements provide this opportunity, although in my experience they could have been better planned (Youth worker).

- 9.17 Work placements do provide youth work students with opportunities to gain valuable practical experience. However, as suggested above, it appears that the quality of placements is variable and ‘the supervision is really key and it’s often down to luck’ was the view of one final-year student.
- 9.18 A recent Estyn report²³ criticised quality assurance systems linked to work placements, stating that
- neither HEIs nor the Youth Services providing the placements have sufficient ownership of this aspect of the course to commit the resources necessary to undertake quality assurance systematically.
- 9.19 The evaluation heard examples of successful placements, however it is disappointing that some youth work students find the work placement element of courses to be less rewarding and enriching than might be expected, particularly given its importance as an introduction to youth work practice for many students. HEIs should act upon the recommendations made by Estyn in order to raise the quality of work placement supervision, planning and quality assurance systems.

Summary conclusions

- 9.20 HEIs have expanded the number of places available for youth work training, reflecting growing demand for professional qualifications. The policy context in Wales, established by Extending Entitlement and the National Strategy form key parts of policy modules included in courses. However there are concerns in some quarters about whether current youth work courses within higher education are delivering the skilled workforce needed to deliver the vision set out in the National Strategy.
- 9.21 Programmes could benefit from closer and more formal partnership working between the Youth Service and HEIs to ensure programmes are fit for purpose.

²³ Estyn, 2010. *A survey of professional qualification training for youth workers in Wales*. Cardiff: Estyn

10 Thematic analysis and recommendations

10.1 The Youth Service Strategy clearly brought welcome attention, and funding, to the Youth Service. This was a sector that had previously suffered due to a lack of overall vision and central strategic direction. As such the concept of a Strategy was received with enthusiasm by the sector as it was seen to provide, for the first time, a framework which was relevant to youth work in Wales. However, in previous sections of this report the original actions have been compared with what has taken place in the period 2007 – 2010 and it is clear that not all the actions have been achieved. In this section each of the overall aims and objectives of the Strategy are considered in turn, before more general recommendations for the future are presented.

Overall vision

10.2 *Young people, youth work, Youth Service* stated that the Strategy will:

Provide a vision for youth work in Wales and its impact in contributing to the policy agendas of the Welsh Assembly Government.

10.3 The Strategy has been a welcome document offering a vision for the whole sector to work towards. While some of those interviewed may have queried the finer points contained within it, all agreed that there was a need for a Strategy. From the outset there was buy-in from the Principal Youth Officers and there is evidence that locally the Strategy has shaped delivery to different degrees. It has acted as a useful framework for the development of the Youth Service across Wales, both in the statutory and voluntary sectors and while the general consensus is that the document has not been a radical driver of change, the actions included in the Strategy have served as reference points for those working in the Youth Service, particularly those in planning and managerial roles. On occasion it prompted quite significant changes or additions to work programmes while elsewhere it was used more as a checklist to ensure that current delivery was in line with Welsh Assembly Government thinking.

- 10.4 The Strategy's vision and its content does not however seem to have permeated far beyond the Youth Service teams in the local authorities. Some consultees were disappointed that the Strategy held relatively little sway or authority (during the evaluation, it has frequently been referred to as a document lacking in 'clout'.) It was believed that from the initial launch onwards the Strategy's profile was too low. While a low awareness of the Strategy at grass-roots level is understandable and not a great cause for concern as there is a role for the Principal Youth Officers (in the maintained sector) and CWVYS (for the voluntary sector) to translate and disseminate key messages, the comments received from some consultees that the Strategy was not on the radar of their managers and directors is of greater concern.
- 10.5 This issue of the Strategy's influence and impact has links with the development of national standards, for which there is strong support among local authorities' Principal Youth Officers. Contributors to the evaluation consider that a revised document, with agreed national standards built in, will afford the Strategy greater weight and influence.

Sustainability

- 10.6 The second of the Strategy's three key aims was to,
Set out how to identify the staff, structure and resources required by the Youth Service in Wales to meet the needs of that vision
- 10.7 Since the Strategy's publication in March 2007, practitioners and young people have reported changes to Youth Service provision, with many positive developments recorded. Many of these positive developments have been in response to changes in staffing, structures and resources prompted in part by the Strategy. Resources in particular have helped the sector meet the needs of the vision. During the lifetime of the Strategy, additional funding has been secured to support Youth Services and this has been an extremely welcome boost to the maintained Youth Service.
- 10.8 While the total income for Youth Services has increased across Wales, a greater proportion of funding is through additional income, as opposed to core Youth Service budgets. There also remain significant disparities

between the expenditure on the Youth Service at a local level which affects the ability of some areas to fully meet the vision of the Strategy.

- 10.9 Funding for the Youth Service is a constant concern for most of those interviewed regardless of their setting. There was a consensus among consultees that many strategic actions cannot be reached unless they are supported by resources. There was a commonly held view among many practitioners that funding should be linked to actions and national standards, and that the availability of funding should be made known well in advance so that these resources can be considered as part of longer term planning processes.
- 10.10 The remainder of this section outlines the main conclusions that the evaluation team has drawn from the evaluation findings and offers some key recommendations for future services. As a starting point the section comments on each of the evaluation objectives in turn.

Table 7: Verdict on Evaluation Objectives

Evaluation objective	Summary verdict
<p>Assess the success of the strategy so far, in its aim of enhancing the ability of the youth service to deliver a wide range of informal and non-formal learning opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-25 which they choose to engage in.</p>	<p>The findings of this report are based on evidence presented by youth workers in the statutory and voluntary sectors, Youth Service managers, young people and a range of stakeholder organisations.</p> <p>Evidence indicates that Youth Service provision has been enhanced during the lifetime of the Strategy. Youth workers reported that opportunities for young people to take part in activities have been extended, with a particular focus on greater outreach and detached provision. In many local authority areas, the Youth Service assesses the needs of young people aged 11-25 and uses this information to plan provision, including informal and non-formal learning opportunities.</p> <p>Increasingly, local authorities are producing local youth service strategies which provide a robust local framework for the delivery of the youth service and, in many cases, reflect overarching national objectives and priorities.</p> <p>Young people generally recognise that there is now greater choice of provision and better opportunities to engage in the youth service. However, there remain variations across Wales and some young people remain frustrated about the lack of local provision and the quality of resources and facilities. This links to levels of funding for</p>

	<p>the Youth Service, which vary considerably across Wales.</p> <p>While there was evidence that provision for young people has been enhanced during the past 3 years, it is, nevertheless, unclear to what extent these improvements can be attributed to the specific actions included in the Strategy. Practitioners noted that many developments were planned or underway prior to the Strategy's publication. Others, however, appreciated that the Strategy provided a broad framework or direction for the ongoing development of the Youth Service in Wales, providing encouragement for all local authorities to review the quality and structure of provision locally.</p>
<p>Assess the success of the strategy in setting realistic strategic goals for all Youth Service partner organisations to achieve within an appropriate timescale.</p>	<p>As noted above, the Strategy is considered to have been effective in providing a broad strategic framework for the ongoing development of the Youth Service. The strategic vision included in the <i>Young people, youth work, Youth Service</i> is something that organisations across the statutory and voluntary sector appear to have bought into, based on the findings of this evaluation.</p> <p>Alongside the Strategy's broad strategic goals, one needs to consider the specific actions therein. The Strategy set out to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Create an action plan to enable youth work to make an effective contribution to Extending Entitlement and the wider policy aspirations of the Welsh Assembly Government</i></p> <p>The different strands of the Strategy's action plan have been considered in turn throughout this evaluation report. However there are difficulties in assessing the impact of many actions, some of which have been criticised by youth service managers and practitioners for being imprecise and concerned with 'process' rather than outcomes. E.g. a number of actions charge organisations with 'playing a leading role in...'; 'supporting the implementation of...' or 'introducing processes for implementing a collaborative approach to...'. This perception was exacerbated by the description of the Strategy as "guidance" with "no response required".</p> <p>The result is that, by and large, partners perceive the Strategy as having not impacted significantly on the delivery of the youth service. Several other drivers – such as local priorities or the Welsh Assembly Government's seven core aims^[1] for children and young people- were</p>

^[1] The Welsh Assembly Government translated the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into seven core aims. These are:

1. Every child should have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development.

	<p>deemed to play an equal role in shaping changes to the sector, although they may share very similar visions. There is a need therefore for the new Strategy's actions to be clearly defined and SMART – in short the new Strategy should be shaped around clear national standards which drive activity and require partners to achieve benchmarks.</p>
<p>Identify any barriers or constraints that have impeded the progress of the strategy to date;</p>	<p>The evaluation evidence points to a small number of barriers which could have contributed to impeding the progress of the Strategy in the period 2007 – 2010:</p> <p>Although the analysis revealed that the level of resources available for Youth Service provision had increased since the publication of the National Youth Service Strategy, there remain a number of concerns, not least the wide variation in funding across local authorities. Although the amount spent on young people aged 11-25 has increased significantly, the differential in funding between the highest and lowest funding authorities is significant, and is likely to impede progress in terms of equality of the range and quality of provision for young people. Funding for the Youth Service is a constant concern for most of those interviewed and there was a consensus among consultees that many strategic actions cannot be reached unless they are supported by resources in the future.</p> <p>Time is a barrier for many voluntary sector organisations: the capacity available to keep abreast of developments at a national policy level and to engage with local networks is often limited and can be a barrier to the full involvement of the voluntary sector organisations to engage and to contribute to priorities set out in the national Strategy.</p> <p>Many positive examples of fully involving young people in decision making were presented as evidence to the evaluation, however this high level of participation was not the case across all organisations nor across all activities within one organisation. There were also frustrations expressed by some young people with regard to participation although these tended to be linked to other issues, such as funding or transport rather than lack of participation as such.</p>
<p>Collect opinions on how best to</p>	<p>Evidence received from practitioners during the evaluation</p>

2. Every child and young person should have access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including the acquisition of essential personal and social skills.
3. Every child should enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.
4. All children should have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.
5. All children and young people should be listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised.
6. All children and young people should have a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing.
7. No child or young person should be disadvantaged by poverty.

<p>support practitioners in recording evidence of the impact of strategy activities on the active participation, skills development and emotional competence of beneficiaries;</p>	<p>research revealed that a range of tools were already in use to record and demonstrate impact of activities related to the Strategy and that they viewed recording evidence and supporting high quality provision to be linked to the implementation and application of national standards for youth work. The implementation of evidence gathering systems will support both the recording of impact and the roll-out of the standards.</p> <p>Although there had been some delays in implementing evidence gathering systems, by the end of the Strategy's period the vast majority of local authorities were using (or learning to use) management information systems which will contribute to better planning and further benchmarking of performance and provision.</p>
<p>Provide recommendations for possible future development of the Strategy and or the processes / activities within it.</p>	<p>See below for the recommendations to arise from the evaluation.</p>

Recommendations

Funding and strategic planning

Welsh Assembly Government

1. The new National Strategy for the Youth Service in Wales should include, or be accompanied by, national standards for youth work. These standards will formalise the requirements for local authorities with regard to the quality and range of provision for young people.
2. In light of recommendation 1, it is essential that current levels of funding for the Youth Service are, as a minimum, maintained, notwithstanding the current economic climate.

WAG and Local Authorities

3. In order to promote equality of opportunity and provision for young people, there is a need to reduce the local variations in spending per head for young people aged 11-25, as noted in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7 of this

report. ADEW and the PYOG should prioritise this and report on progress to the Welsh Assembly Government.

4. Local Youth Service strategies should reflect the vision set out in the revised National Strategy, while recognising the range of youth work methodologies that can be applied to respond to local needs and circumstances.

Integrated structure

Welsh Assembly Government

5. The revised National Strategy should seek to further strengthen the regional structures that have been formalised during the lifetime of the current Strategy by:
 - a. Ensuring that terms of reference are in place to steer the activities of regional partnerships, regional PYO groups and voluntary sector groups;
 - b. Issuing guidelines on joint working at a regional level, including collaborative approaches to service delivery and workforce development.

PYOG and voluntary sector partnerships

6. Regional groups and planning structures have a critical role to play in ensuring that the National Strategy resonates with, and is relevant to, practitioners. With this in mind:
 - a. Regional PYO groups should ensure that good practice in the delivery of strategic objectives is filtered down to youth workers and partner organisations.
 - b. CWVYS and regional voluntary sector partnerships should develop strategies for engaging with smaller organisations in the voluntary sector, ensuring that they understand the contribution that they can make to the delivery of the revised National Strategy.

Workforce development

Welsh Assembly Government / PYOG

7. The Welsh Assembly Government, working with the PYOG, should improve communication with officers responsible for coordinating training and workforce development in delivering the Workforce Development Action Plan and the manifesto for the youth work workforce in Wales.

Local authorities and voluntary sector partnerships

8. Local authorities should aim to ensure that at least 90%²⁴ of full-time youth workers in the maintained Youth Service are qualified to JNC Professional level qualification.
9. In coordinating the delivery of actions included in the Workforce Development Plan for the Youth Service in Wales, regional voluntary sector partnerships should work to increase the proportion of voluntary sector youth workers who have undertaken training that is endorsed by the Education and Training Standards Committee or is included on the National Qualifications Framework.

National standards

Welsh Assembly Government

10. The national standards should include SMART targets, with clear guidance on how they apply to the maintained and voluntary sector.

Welsh Assembly Government and ADEW

11. The national standards should be agreed by ADEW, ensuring commitment at a strategic level to achieving the targets and key performance indicators.

²⁴ This is the target included in the National Youth Service Strategy.

Engagement

PYOG

12. Regional PYO groups should ensure that effective practice in engaging young people is shared and disseminated across local authorities and with the voluntary sector. In doing so, they should refer to the good practice in engaging young people in decision making identified in this report.

WLGA

13. The dissemination of good practice in relation to engaging with young people to help shape service delivery should also extend beyond the Youth Service. Other service areas could learn from the way in which the Youth Service engages with young people to influence and inform provision. The WLGA should consider what lessons can be learnt across local authority departments, to ensure that young people can input into other areas of service delivery that impact upon them, including health, social services, culture, recreation and education.

Youth work training in higher education

Welsh Assembly Government

14. As noted in the Workforce Development Plan, it is essential that HEIs deliver programmes of training that reflect the purpose, principles, values and outcomes identified in the revised National Youth Service Strategy. The revised Strategy should articulate clearly to HEIs the skills and competences required by the youth work workforce in order to ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy and its vision.

HEIs and local authorities

15. The Youth Service should address the recommendations relating to work placements in Estyn's recent report²⁵ into youth worker training as a matter of priority. Specifically, there is a need to:

Improve the clarity of guidance to work placement supervisors about their educational role in courses, so they know clearly their responsibilities for developing trainees' professional skills, knowledge and understanding;

Improve access to training for work placement supervisors, to ensure they can undertake their training responsibilities and assessment roles effectively.

HEIs and PYOG

16. Strategic links between HEIs and PYOs should be improved: HEIs should ensure that representatives of regional Principal Youth Officer Groups are involved in programme development or review panels, ensuring that the courses better reflect the needs of local authority Youth Services.

Welsh language provision

Local authorities

17. Evidence presented as part of the evaluation suggests that there has been an increase in the number of bilingual and Welsh language activities for young people. These appear, however, to be in isolated areas. The Youth Service should assess levels of demand for Welsh language provision and plan provision in response to identified need.

²⁵ Estyn, 2010. *A survey of professional qualification training for youth workers in Wales*. Cardiff: Estyn

Management Information Systems

Local authorities

18. Local authorities should ensure that they have robust management information systems in place to collect data on take up, outcomes and progression following participation in youth work activities. Where this is done effectively, local authorities are using this data to better plan and coordinate provision to ensure the needs of young people are met.

Appendix 1: Methodology

Summary

This appendix describes how the evaluation of the National Youth Service Strategy for Wales was carried out. There were three main stages to the evaluation: desk research, fieldwork (which included one-one consultations/discussions, group consultations/discussions with practitioners, group consultations/discussions with young people, and a practitioner survey), and reporting.

Following the guidelines in the original invitation to tender and a subsequent project inception meeting the study was based on the following key tasks:

Data Collection and Analysis

The evaluation was based on four sources of evidence:

- Desk Research
 - Analysis of documentary evidence, both published reports and strategies/reports provided by those consulted. Previous inspection and thematic reports published by Estyn provided useful context for the study.
- Consultations
 - Structured, face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews between the evaluation team and the Youth Service Strategy team at the Welsh Assembly Government;
 - Structured, face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews between the evaluation team and Principal Youth Officers;
 - Structured, face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews between the evaluation team and other key

individuals from the sector (voluntary sector staff and representatives; Higher Education providers, local authority training providers, steering group members).

- Survey
 - An online survey completed by youth workers.
- Group discussions with young people
 - Discussions held with young people from four case study areas.

Reporting

This main report and annexes were drafted by the evaluation team in consultation with some members of the Steering Panel, who have commented on the draft text.

Methodology

Planning and Preparation

Following the award of the contract, the Youth Service Strategy Team invited a Steering Group of experts drawn from the field to oversee the work of the evaluation team.

The inception meeting took place in Cathays Park on 15 September 2009. In attendance were officials from the policy team, research team and members of the project Steering Group. Three members of the Arad evaluation team were present. The attendees were: Tanis Cunnick, Duncan Mackenzie, Debbie Tynen, Liz Rose (all Welsh Assembly Government), Jane Williams (Principal Youth Officer, Conwy), Prof Howard Williamson (University of Glamorgan), Keith Thomas (Youth Cymru), Alun Griffiths (University of Wales, Newport), John Dyer (Fairbridge), Stuart Harries, Sioned Lewis, Brett Duggan (all Arad Consulting).

On the basis of initial desk research and discussions at steering group the evaluation team designed a methodology which focused on reviewing all of the Actions contained in the Youth Service Strategy (see Appendix 2).

Desk Research

The majority of the desk research took place in October and November 2009. The key items reviewed were:

- Estyn inspection reports on Youth Support Services in local authorities in Wales;
- Estyn thematic report on the training of youth support workers and level 3 qualifications; the thematic report on level 4 qualifications;
- Data from the last audit of the local authority Youth Service in Wales;
- Youth Workforce Development Plan.
- Local Youth Service Strategies

The desk research informed the subsequent strands of the evaluation by providing the team with headline findings which were incorporated in the design of the evaluation questionnaire and interview guides. The research found:

- an impressive range of activities; and the evaluation sought to capture this diversity of activity;
- examples of good practice which often demonstrated strong strategic links with external partners and networks;
- partnerships worked best when operating at two levels, the strategic level and at the operational / delivery level;
- Estyn reported that many local authorities could do far more to involve young people in decision making; a lack of evaluation; accreditation and not identifying gaps in provision;
- increasing use of multimedia, texting etc in working to engage young people in decision-making;
- mixed evidence of outcomes and impact (and the recording of data to demonstrate impact);
- examples of sharing resources across partners;

- examples of accessing funds from many sources.

Consultations

Consultations took place between November 2009 and April 2010. The discussion schedules were based on the Strategy's Activities (Appendix 2) and were carried out in two rounds.

The first round of interviews took place with Welsh Assembly Government staff, the chair of the Principal Youth Officers group and representatives of the WLGA, Youth Cymru, Estyn and CWVYS. These consultations focused on general comments about the strategy, its reach and its influence; delivery structures and partnerships; workforce development; access to services; monitoring and recording impact and exploring what aspects should be addressed in revised strategy.

The second round of interviews were with those individuals more involved in the delivery of the Strategy or with a particular interest. All Principal Youth Officers (PYOs) were offered an opportunity to take part in the research and 18 of the 22 local authority PYO's were interviewed along with training officers in some areas. The PYO's were also interviewed during group meetings. Representatives from the further and higher education sectors were also interviewed.

A full list of those interviewed is included in Appendix 5.

Consultation process: Local area studies

Six local areas were selected for a more in-depth study. A long-list of possible case study areas was drawn based on desk research and suggestions received in the preliminary consultations. The criteria for drawing the long-list was based on the themes of the Youth Service Strategy and the objectives of the evaluation. Therefore, rather than define rigid criteria, the team set out the characteristics and topics that local area

studies should illustrate were set out. In some cases, the case studies covered several themes.

Figure A1

Theme / characteristic to be explored in local area study	Other variables in agreeing a sample
Range and quality of provision Workforce development Partnership working within the youth service Monitoring and recording impact Access to services Effective detached and outreach youth work Impact of Strategy on voluntary sector delivery of youth work	Geographically, socio-economically and 'contextually' diverse (i.e. areas with varying levels of investment in youth services)
Engagement of young people in decision-making Partnerships with other sectors (FE and HE)	Sample to include examples of effective practice and examples that illustrate barriers and constraints faced.

The long list of areas and themes were presented to the Steering group at a meeting on 28th October 2009.

The areas selected for a more in-depth study were Rhondda Cynon Taf, Pembrokeshire, Neath Port Talbot, Merthyr Tydfil, Wrexham and Anglesey. In these areas, in addition to the Principal Youth Officer, a wider range of consultations took place, to include other local authority staff, representatives from the voluntary sector and group discussions with young people.

On the advice of the Steering Group a further two thematic case studies were undertaken: a more detailed review and interviews relating to Higher Education and of workforce development.

Practitioner survey – January – February 2010.

It was agreed that a practitioner survey would be circulated electronically and returned directly to the evaluation team. A link to an online survey was cascaded by email via Principal Youth Officers (x22) to the youth workers in their area. The attention of the Principal Youth Officers was brought to the

survey during the subsequent individual consultations with them also. Although the survey was primarily undertaken online, this was supplemented by a small number of paper-based questionnaires where more convenient for the respondents. To capture views of the voluntary sector staff, readers of the Readers of CWVYS newsletter were also asked to complete the questionnaire.

145 practitioners responded to the survey. The vast majority (130 respondents) worked in the statutory sector. 60% worked full time, 40% part time. A copy of the questionnaire is included below.

Circulating the survey to practitioners via Principal Youth Officers was seen as the most expedient and practical method. A link to an online questionnaire was sent to PYOs who, in turn, forwarded it to staff by email. One advantage of this method is that it was not necessary for the research team to collect contact details for youth workers across Wales. Thanks to the cooperation of PYOs, the questionnaire was distributed swiftly and efficiently. A disadvantage is that the exact number of youth workers who received the questionnaire is not known and, therefore, determining the response rate is not possible²⁶.

Following a similar approach, the research team circulated the questionnaire to voluntary sector youth workers by including a link to the survey on the CWVYS newsletter.

Young People's Discussion Workshops

The evaluation topics were adapted to a workshop format for the discussions with young people. Young people were consulted in Neath Port Talbot Youth Council, Ferndale Youth Club in Rhondda Cynon Taf, during a

²⁶ We do know that the potential total audience for the survey across the maintained sector was 2,148, which would give a response rate of 6% for the maintained sector (i.e. the number of "Youth work delivery staff (core staff) in Welsh local authorities" according to the Local Government Data Unit). It should be noted that some 80% of the staff work part-time according to the same source, and in a small number of cases may only work an hour or two a week and may not have received the questionnaire or found the time to complete it.

Llais Ni (the Anglesey Youth Forum) residential event, at the Tanyard Youth Club and with young People taking part in the planning day for the Merthyr local Youth Service strategy. The discussion agenda for the workshops is included below.

Your Opinions: Youth Service Strategy

1. Main Questionnaire

Arad Consulting has been contracted by the Welsh Assembly Government to evaluate the impact of the Youth Service Strategy. To do this, we are keen to gain your views as someone who works in the youth service. We would be grateful if you could spend a few minutes answering the following questions.

Your responses will be treated confidentially and will not be shared with your colleagues or anyone else. Your responses are very important to us and your contribution would therefore be much appreciated.

* 1. Please complete these details about your role

Your role (click arrow for a drop-down list) Full-time or Part-time?
Other (please describe)

* 2. Do you work in the statutory or voluntary sector?

- Statutory (local authority)
 Voluntary sector

* 3. Which organisation do you work for?

Select which local authority ** or ** Organisation
Your organisation
Or please write in the name of your employer

* 4. Does your organisation comply with the Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales?

- Yes
 No
 I don't know whether my organisation complies
 I'm not aware of the Youth Work Curriculum Statement

* 5. Are you aware of the National Youth Service Strategy for Wales?

- Yes
 No (please go to question 7)

Your Opinions: Youth Service Strategy

6. If yes, does the Youth Service Strategy have an impact on your work?

- No, no impact on my work
 Yes, through working towards a local authority action plan
 Yes, through working in partnership towards wider action plans
 Yes, other influence (please state below)

Other (please specify)

* 7. Has Youth Service provision become more accessible to young people in your area during the past three years?

- Yes, significantly more accessible
 Yes, slightly
 No, no noticeable change
 No, provision is less accessible

* 8. Has new provision been introduced in your area during the past three years?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Please provide an example (or examples).

9. If yes, was the new provision introduced as a result of the following?

- Feedback from young people
 Priorities identified in association with partners (eg 14-19 networks, other authorities)
 Priorities identified in a local plan for young people
 Priorities included in the Youth Services Strategy
 Additional funding
 Other reasons

If other, please give examples.

Your Opinions: Youth Service Strategy

* 10. Has existing provision been changed in any way in the past three years?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

If so, how?

* 11. In the past three years, has there been an increase in the following activities in your local area?

	Yes, a significant increase	Yes, some increase	No increase	A decrease in activity
Training for youth workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing effective practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing (of provision)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-formal learning for young people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joint training / events with other LAs or organisations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish to include examples or further comments to support your answers, please do so here:

Your Opinions: Youth Service Strategy

* 12. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree to an extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to an extent	Strongly disagree
The youth service is meeting the needs of young people in my local area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The youth service in my local area works well with young people to identify their needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Young people are involved in decisions which affect them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Young people friendly versions of all relevant documents are produced	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish to include examples or further comments to support your answers, please do so here:

* 13. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree to an extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to an extent	Strongly disagree
My organisation works effectively with external partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This partnership working enhances the quality of services available to young people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This partnership working ensures that services are available to greater numbers of young people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide an example of an effective partnership that your organization has been involved with:

Your Opinions: Youth Service Strategy

* 14. During the past three years, has there been more effective partnership working between the voluntary and maintained sector Youth Service in your area?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Please provide examples or further comments to support your answer.

* 15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree to an extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to an extent	Disagree
There are sufficient opportunities available for me to support my professional development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to access information about training and professional development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I hope to continue as a youth worker for the foreseeable future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish to include examples or further comments to support your answers, please do so here:

* 16. Do you use methods to measure the progress made by young people?

- Yes
 No
 Don't Know

Please list methods (for example Demonstrating Success, in-house forms etc.)

Your Opinions: Youth Service Strategy

* 17. What changes should be made in order to improve youth services in your local area or nationally?

* 18. As part of the ongoing evaluation of the Youth Service Strategy we may wish to contact you over the telephone with some further questions - would you be willing to take part in a telephone discussion?

- Yes
 No

2. Contact details

* 1. If yes, how should we contact you?

Name
Phone number or email

3. Thank you | Díolch

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Young People's Discussion Workshop

Young people were consulted in Neath Port Talbot Youth Council, Ferndale Youth Club in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Llais Ni, the Anglesey Youth Forum, the Tanyard Youth Club and young People taking part in the planning day for the Merthyr local Youth Service strategy

Discussion Workshop Agenda

2 mins Introduction – Why are we here?

10 mins Ice breaker quiz

>Give out sheet 'What kind of activities can be carried out by young people in youth centres A-Z?

Split into groups – sections of the alphabet – list activities – group feedback (and hand in sheets)

>Give out cards and black marker

5 mins 5 things you really enjoy doing/interests/activities

>Give out big flipchart sheets

15 mins How many of these things do you/can you do in a youth club?

Stick them in your youth club – sheet of A4

Which club or group/where are they available?

How long have you been going to that place?

Is it better than it used to be? Has anything improved? If so, what?

Have you had an input on these activities being programmed for you?

>Give out red pens

5 mins Any problems with you attending/taking part in activities?

Does it close too early?

Do you have problems getting to and from there?

Is there enough equipment?

>Give out stickers

5 mins Have you ever raised any of these issues with the club?

Place sticker against issue raised

How – what happened?

How did you raise it and with who

What was the outcome?

Appendix 2: Youth Service Strategy Actions

Action for the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)

Action			Chapter reference
WAG 1. Increase the resources available for high quality Youth Service provision which takes forward its vision in the maintained and voluntary sectors. By 2010			Chapter 2
WAG 1.1	subject to the outcomes of the Welsh Assembly Government's budget planning process, we will aim over the next three years to increase the annual amount spent from the current £56 per year for each young person between the ages of 11-25 years.	From April 2008	
WAG 1.2	review the current funding allocations and methods of distribution to secure the most effective balance between national, regional and local funding streams.	From April 2007	
WAG 1.3	develop and implement a market research and marketing strategy designed to increase the numbers of young people using the Youth Service from 200,000 per year to 300,000 a year.	From April 2007	
WAG 2. Implement and work within a structure which links national, regional and local policy making, delivery and monitoring and evaluation in line with the Assembly's response to the Beecham Report. By 2008			Chapter 3
WAG 2.1	conduct a regional analysis of needs and provision leading to business plans which would influence local Children and Young People's Plan.	From April 2007	
WAG 2.2	work with local authorities and partners to review and evaluate existing provision including current delivery methods, workforce development, and voluntary sector capacity and to scope changes required for the implementation of this strategy.	From April 2007	
WAG 2.3	produce and implement 4 regional workforce development plans which ensure the effective regional and local delivery of training and on-going support and development of those working in the Youth Service.	From April 2007	
WAG 2.4	develop regional, organisation structures and training delivery mechanisms for maintained and voluntary sectors.	From April 2007	

WAG 2.5	develop and implement systems to manage regionally allocated funds to ensure provision secures equality of opportunity.	From April 2008	
WAG 2.6	work with individual local authorities to review their contribution to regional strategic development and to secure quality provision for all young people.	From January 2008	
WAG 3. Develop and introduce a national workforce development strategy which ensures the effective training and on-going support and development of those working in the Youth Service. By 2008.			Chapter 4
WAG 3.1	work with partners to develop a national workforce development strategy for the Youth Service.	From April 2007	
WAG 3.2	introduce processes and procedures for implementing a collaborative approach which will result in both regional and local delivery.	From April 2007	
WAG 3.3	implement a reconfigured mandatory national Coherent Route of training which meets the needs of employers based on the sector's National Occupational Standards, the requirements of the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC), the Curriculum and Qualifications Framework Wales (CQFW) and the Education and Training Standards (ETS) committee.	From Sept 2007	
WAG 3.4	agree joint action for ensuring that a minimum of 90% of those employed full-time are qualified to JNC Professional level qualification.	From Sept 2007	
WAG 3.5	identify actions to ensure that a minimum of 90% of those employed part-time are qualified to Youth Support Worker level 1 or 2.	From Sept 2007	
WAG 3.6	identify action to ensure that a minimum of 90% of those working in the voluntary Youth Service sector hold an appropriate qualification as determined by the sectors standards linked to the Coherent Route of Training.	From Sept 2008	
WAG 3.7	detail action for developing and implementing a Continuing Professional Development programme underpinned by a 'fit to practice' process.	From April 2007	

<p>WAG 4. Support the further development of effective synergy between the voluntary and maintained sector Youth Service to ensure a strong joint Youth Service building on the strengths of each sector. By 2010</p>			Chapter 5
WAG 4.1	<p>review the ways in which the Welsh Assembly Government works with local authorities, Principal Youth Officers (PYOs), the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWWYS) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to take forward all aspects of this strategy.</p>	From April 2007	
WAG 4.2	<p>develop funding arrangements which better support the implementation of the Youth Service goals, including regional arrangements and review of the National Voluntary Organisations (NVYO) grant scheme working closely with the regional groups to develop relationships.</p>	From April 2008	
WAG 4.3	<p>work with the Youth Work Advisory Sub Groups on Training, Research and Evaluation, Integrated Approaches and Bilingual Provision set up in autumn 2006.</p>	Ongoing from October 2006	
<p>WAG 5. Lead by example in the participation of young people in policy development, consultation, information and advice, appointment of staff, audit and procurement. By 2008</p>			Chapter 8
WAG 5.1	<p>involve young people in all relevant appointments, procurement, audit, consultation.</p>	From 2007	
WAG 5.2	<p>produce young people friendly documents on all relevant issues.</p>	From 2007	
WAG 5.3	<p>engage young people in developments and decision making on all policies which affect them.</p>	From 2007	
WAG 5.4	<p>further develop and disseminate training and outcomes of the Participation Extension project for young people including audit, procurement, appointments, and consultation, involvement and young people friendly documents.</p>	From 2007	
WAG 5.5	<p>support and facilitate Youth Service work together with Funky Dragon, Youth Forums and Schools Councils to enhance the network of participation opportunities for young people throughout Wales.</p>	From 2007	
WAG	<p>encourage and support all relevant</p>	From April	

5.6	organisations, including the Welsh Assembly Government itself, to achieve the Participation quality mark as this is identified by the National Standards for Children and Young People's Participation.	2007	
WAG 6. Secure the contribution of the Youth Service to Extending Entitlement and 14-19 Learning Pathways. By 2008.			Chapter 1
WAG 6.1	ensure the developing regional arrangements for Youth Service training and funding strengthen and support the implementation of Extending Entitlement through young people planning structures at local authority level.	From April 2007	
WAG 6.2	develop further guidance to support the mutual contribution to 14-19 Learning Pathways particularly in activities related to the Learning Core, the non-formal strand of an individual learning pathway, youth workers undertaking the Learning Coach role and the Youth Service contribution to the personal support framework as part of Learning Pathways Guidance III.	From Autumn 2007	
WAG 7. Further develop and implement consistent national and local measures to demonstrate the impact of youth work on young people's learning in the context of Extending Entitlement and 14-19 Learning Pathways and building on Demonstrating Success. By 2008.			Chapter 6
WAG 7.1	further develop and introduce a range of tools as part of Demonstrating Success to measure the impact of Extending Entitlement and 14-19 Learning Pathways on young people.	From April 2007	
WAG 7.2	develop a set of key performance indicators including Demonstrating Success which reflects the aims of policies for young people in Wales.	From 2007	
WAG 7.3	work with stakeholders to develop a small but relevant set of Key Performance Indicators for the Youth Service.	From April 2007	
WAG 8. Support the development of consistent high quality provision in all elements of the Youth Service in Wales. By 2011.			Chapter 8
WAG 8.1	work with Estyn to further develop and refine the inspection arrangements for youth support services and local authority provision.	From 2007	
WAG 8.2	support the implementation and application of national standards for youth work.	From 2008	

WAG 8.3	support the implementation of the national standards for participation.	From 2007	
WAG 8.4	support the Education and Training Standards committee in developing its rigorous independent endorsement of training for youth workers.	From 2007	
WAG 8.5	work with regional arrangements to develop peer support and review and disseminate good practice across the region and between regions.	From 2007	

Action for the Welsh Local Government Association and Local Authorities (LA)

LA 1. Develop regional partnerships building on the existing 4 consortia identified by ADEW. By April 2008.			Chapter 3
LA 1.1	provide effective strategic direction and management for the delivery of Youth Service activities which contribute to outcomes set out in the national strategy.	From April 2007	
LA 1.2	work together with senior officials and PYOs in each region and Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Local Government Association officials to set up arrangements for regional organisation and funding allocation.	From April 2007	
LA 1.3	work with the Welsh Assembly Government to take forward workforce development, training, and strategic development across the region.	From September 2007	
LA 1.4	inform national policy, share effective practice and contribute to decisions on allocation of funding at regional level.	From April 2008	
LA 1.5	develop and implement a market research and marketing strategy designed to increase the numbers of young people using the Youth Service from 200,000 per year to 300,000 a year.	From April 2007	
LA 2. Lead by example in providing high quality non-formal education and learning in appropriate locations and environments. By 2011			Chapter 4
LA 2.1	review the current structure and organisation of provision so that youth workers in direct contact with young people are appropriately qualified, resourced, supported and their performance managed.	From September 2007	
LA 2.2	review their current centre based provision to evaluate its fitness for purpose in delivering high quality non-formal education and learning experiences to significant numbers of young people and be prepared to make changes where this is not the case.	From September 2007	
LA 2.3	work with partners, local planning structures, 14-19 Networks and other authorities to ensure provision is available for all young people.	From September 2007	

LA 2.4	work with young people on an ongoing basis to ascertain need and become flexible in developing to meet young people's changing requirements.	From April 2007	
LA 3. Play a leading role in engaging young people in making decisions, planning and reviewing actions on all matters that affect them. By 2008.			Chapter 8
LA 3.1	involve young people in all aspects of policy development which affect them using the skills, knowledge and experience of young people in making decisions on relevant appointments, consultations, audit and procurement processes.	From 2007	
LA 3.2	produce young people friendly versions of all relevant documents in collaboration with young people.	From 2007	
LA 3.3	support and facilitate Youth Service work together with Funky Dragon, Youth Forums and Schools Councils to enhance the network of participation opportunities for young people throughout Wales.	From 2007	
LA 3.4	encourage the maintained Youth Service to achieve the Participation quality mark as this is identified within the National Standards for Children and Young People's Participation.	From April 2007	
LA 4. Support the implementation and maintenance of national evidence gathering systems that meet agreed standards. By 2008.			Chapter 6
LA 4.1	support the development of national standards for the gathering of appropriate evidence about the Youth Service as a means of ensuring value for money in expenditure of public funds.	From September 2007	
LA 4.2	obtain evidence which secures and maintains equality of opportunity for young people in their area and region.	From April 2008	
LA 4.3	benchmark performance and provision.	From April 2009	
LA 5. Increase the funding available to support the Youth Service to recognise the contribution youth work makes to young people's learning. By 2010.			Chapter 2
LA 5.1	review the balance between the amount spent on formal learning (approx £4000 per head	From April 2007	

	each year) and the amount spent on activities outside formal education (approx £56 per head each year).		
LA 5.2	secure greater investment in non-formal learning to meet the needs of young people in their area to achieve benefits and savings in support services in the medium and longer terms.	From April 2008	

Action for the voluntary sector (VS)

VS 1. Develop a regional structure to mirror the maintained sector and to ensure appropriate communication and involvement at local level. By April 2008			Chapters 3&5
VS 1.1	provide effective strategic direction and management for the delivery of Youth Service activities which contribute to the outcomes set out in the national strategy.	From April 2008	
VS 1.2	bring together appropriate individuals to work with Welsh Assembly Government regional officials responsible for youth work.	From Sept 2007	
VS 1.3	work with the Welsh Assembly Government to take forward workforce development, training, and strategic development across the region.	From April 2008	
VS 1.4	inform national policy, share effective practice and contribute to decisions on allocation of funding at regional level.	From April 2007	
VS 1.5	develop and implement a market research and marketing strategy designed to increase the numbers of young people using the Youth Service from 200,000 per year to 300,000 a year.	From April 2007	
VS 2. Play a leading role in engaging young people in making decisions, planning and reviewing actions on all matters that affect them. By 2008.			Chapter 8
VS 2.1	involve young people in all aspects of policy development which affect them.	From 2007	
VS 2.2	use the skills, knowledge and experience of young people in making decisions on relevant appointments, consultations, audit and procurement processes.	From 2007	

VS 2.3	produce young people friendly versions of all relevant documents in collaboration with young people.	From 2007	
VS 2.4	Work together with Funky Dragon, Youth Forums and Schools Councils to enhance the network of participation opportunities for young people throughout Wales.	From 2007	
VS 2.5	encourage organisations to achieve the Participation quality mark.	From April 2007	
VS 3. Support the development of a range of national standards for the voluntary sector which will make explicit its commitment to the Youth Service and Extending Entitlement and which contributes to the work of local planning structures for services for children and young people. By April 2008.			Chapter 6
VS 3.1	support the development of a range of national standards that links its work to the Youth Service in Wales and to Extending Entitlement.	From Sept 2007	
VS 3.2	maintain a commitment to quality provision and explicit engagement in Extending Entitlement and the Youth Service.	From April 2007	
VS 3.3	engage with members and partners to identify and deliver the particular contribution made by voluntary sector organisations to the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government.	From April 2007	
VS 4. Support the implementation and maintenance of national evidence gathering systems that meet agreed standards. By April 2008.			Chapter 6
VS 4.1	support the development of national standards for the gathering of appropriate evidence about the Youth Service as a means of ensuring value for money in expenditure of public funds.	From April 2007	
VS 4.2	obtain evidence which secures and maintains equality of opportunity for young people all over Wales.	From April 2008	
VS 4.3	introduce systems that meet the national standard for benchmarking performance and provision.	From April 2009	

Action for the Further and Higher Education Sectors

HE 1. Take advantage of opportunities offered by the Furlong report to review and expand provision for youth work training in HE. By 2008.			Chapter 9
HE 1.1	seek to expand the number of places available for training of youth workers at all levels, including Welsh medium provision.	From 2007	
HE 2. Evaluate current programmes to ensure they meet the needs and aspirations for the Youth Service in Wales and offer best fit with locally delivered training to secure progression for students. By 2008.			Chapter 9
HE 2.1	take account of the vision and goals set out in this strategy and the policy context in Wales to develop and enhance programmes which ensure the highest quality provision for HE students, and high quality graduates to deliver the strategy.	From 2007	
HE 2.2	ensure programmes meet the needs of: Employers based in the sectors, Young people National Occupational Standards Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) Curriculum and Qualifications Framework Wales (CQFW) and Education and Training Standards (ETS) committee.		
HE 3. Work in partnership with regional planning arrangements for Youth Service training to ensure a variety of high quality provision from initial training to Masters and leadership and management. By 2007.			Chapter 9
HE 3.1	work with regional planning groups to ensure that regional planning secures high quality training at all levels to meet workforce needs.	From 2007	
HE 4. The Further Education Sector should work with partners in HE, Local Authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government to explore the potential contribution to youth work training and development. By 2008.			Chapter 9
HE 4.1	work with regional planning groups and with HE to develop appropriate programmes and opportunities for youth workers at various stages in their careers.	From Sept 2007	
HE 4.2	work in partnership with regional planning arrangements for Youth Service training to ensure a variety of high quality provision from initial training to CPD, Masters and leadership	From Sept 2007	

	and management		
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Appendix 4: Workforce Development Plan for Wales – 10 Strategic Actions

1. The Assembly working with the Education and Training Standards Committee to implement a process which ensures that the organisational purpose, principles, values and outcomes for young people identified in the National Youth Service strategy and the National Occupational standards result in focused and comparable learning opportunities for Youth and Community Work students across all the Academic Institutions in Wales.
2. Develop a process to centralise the coordination and delivery of training for Youth Support workers;
3. Establishing a Regional process for the strategic planning and strategic delivery of Youth Support worker training;
4. Increasing the mandatory requirement for the Coherent Route to ensure ease of transferability from Level 3 into Level 4.
5. Developing a registration system for JNC qualified workers;
6. Developing a 'Code of Ethics' for use by those working in the Youth Service in Wales;
7. Carrying out research into the recruitment and retention of those working in the Youth Service in Wales;
8. Introducing a framework for the development of CPD programmes for Youth Workers at all levels within the service;
9. Developing a set of 'Youth Service Standards' relevant to the workforce
10. Carrying out an annual evaluation of the relevance, effectiveness and value for money of training provision for Youth and Community Workers in Wales.

Appendix 5: Consultations

Groups

- Project Steering Group:
 - Our thanks go to Keith Thomas, Jane Williams, Alun Griffiths, John Dyer, Howard Williamson, Debbie Tynen, Tanis Cunnick, and Duncan Mackenzie (and later Joanne Corke and Julie Owens) for their guidance
- North Wales Regional Principal Youth Officers Meeting
- All Wales Principal Youth Officers Meeting
- Youth work students at Caerleon campus
- Discussions with a group or groups of young people at:
 - RCT Ferndale Youth Centre
 - RCT It's All About YOUth event, University of Glamorgan
 - Tanyard Youth Club, Pembroke Dock
 - Neath Port Talbot Youth Forum
 - Merthyr Open day
 - Anglesey forum, Llais Ni.

Individual discussions

Keith Thomas	Youth Cymru
Tanis Cunnick	Welsh Assembly Government
Liz Rose	Welsh Assembly Government
Courtney Taylor	Welsh Assembly Government
Tim Opie	WLGA
Donna Dickenson	Wrexham PYO and Chair of PYO group
Paul Glaze	CWVYS
Ged Kerlake	Estyn
Chris Hole	Merthyr Tydfil Principal Youth Officer
Jane Williams	Conwy Principal Youth Officer
Ann Sweeting	Ceredigion Principal Youth Officer
Paul O'Neill	Caerphilly Principal Youth Officer
Lisa Bruford	Treharris Boys and Girls Club
Nigel Sheppard	Treharris Boys and Girls Club
Eirian Evans	Pembrokeshire Principal Youth Officer
Lee Hind	PAVS
Dr John Rose	Trinity College, Carmarthen
Heidi Holland	Pembrokeshire Training Officer
Prof Howard Williamson	University of Glamorgan
Enid Williams	Anglesey Principal Youth Officer
Jan Jones	Neath Port Talbot Principal Youth Officer
Roger Ellerton	Denbighshire Principal Youth Officer
Gareth Jones	Swansea Principal Youth Officer
Bob Fussell	Vale of Glamorgan Principal Youth Officer
Barbara Howe	Torfaen Principal Youth Officer
Georgina Jones	Monmouthshire Principal Youth Officer
Tracie Thomas	Monmouthshire Training Officer
Chris Jones	Powys Principal Youth Officer

Rick Williams	Cardiff Principal Youth Officer
Sue Williams	Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Youth and Community Project
Charlie Chapman	Participation Officer, Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Youth and Community Project
John Heffernan	Tanyard Youth Club, Pembroke
Nia Morris	Gwynedd Principal Youth Officer
Louise Cook	Rhondda Cynon Taf Principal Youth Officer
Jo Sims	Blaenau Gwent Principal Youth Officer
Mick Conroy	University of Wales, Newport
Colin Heslop	Glyndwr University