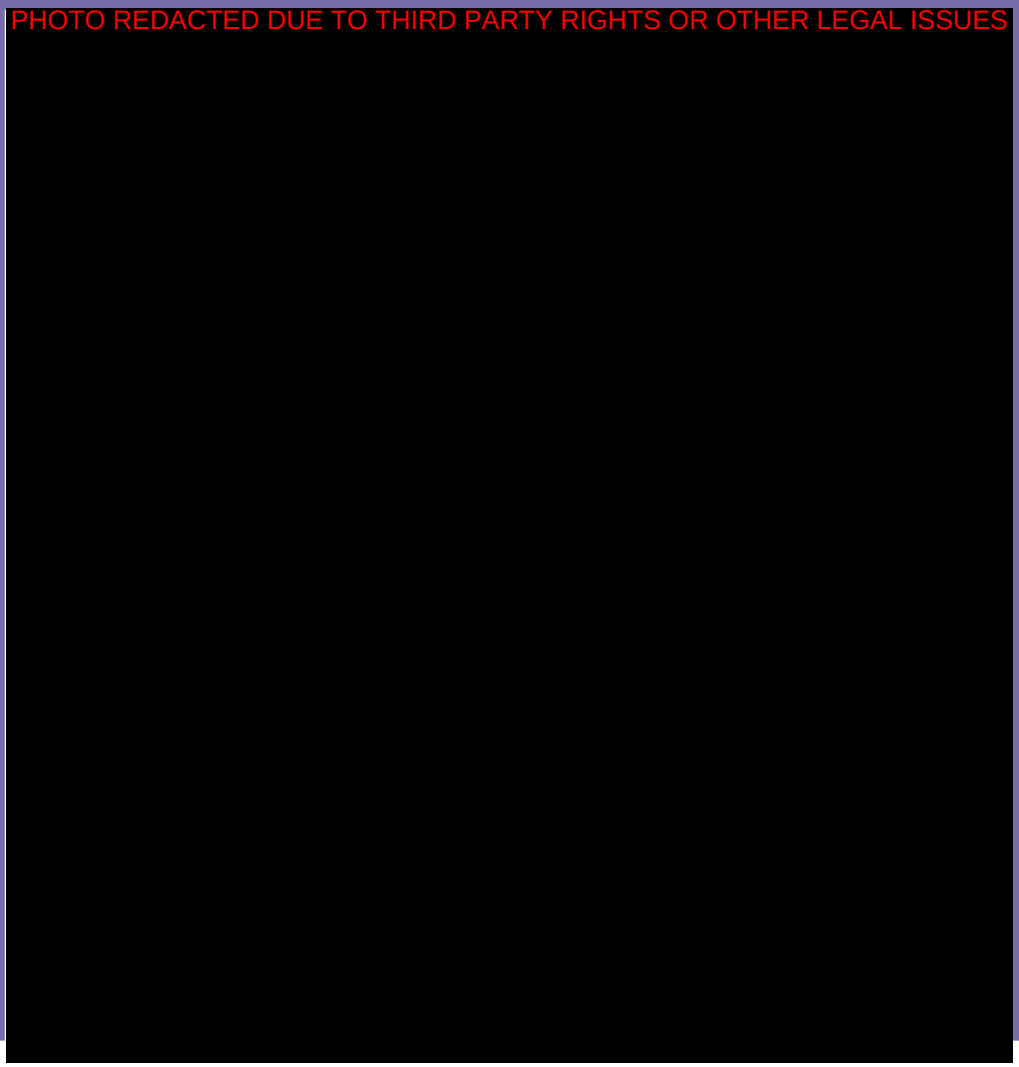
Yr Adran Plant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau
Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

An Exploration of the Learning and Accreditation needs for Maintained and Voluntary Youth Service Provision:

Recognition of Quality Assured Life Long Learning ((QALL): informal and non-formal learning)) for the Adult Workforce and Young People through the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales.



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Analysis for Policy

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Author: Nichola Tucker-Welton

Audience	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales and Youth Strategy Branch—Youth Service
Action	Recommendation to be noted by CQFW Team and forwarded to the CQFW CCAF

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Summary

The research has been undertaken as the result of a partnership between the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The ESRC's "Placement Fellowship Scheme" encourages social science researchers to spend time in partner organisations, such as Government Departments and Devolved administration, to undertake policy–relevant studies whilst helping to develop the research skills of people employed in them. Funding is shared.

The Credit & Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) was launched in 2003 and brings all recognised learning into a single unifying structure. Figure 1 (p.16) illustrates CQFW'S single unifying structure through its learning and progression routes. The framework merges the concepts of learning achievements (credit) and the demands made by that learning on the learner (level) to create a system that is able to embrace all types and styles of learning and all qualifications (CQFW, 2007). CQFW's revised (2008) three pillars of learning highlights its inclusive framework which is outlined in figure 2 (p.17). Figure 2 (p.17) illustrates the learning that takes place within Higher Education, general and vocational education and training and life long learning that can be encompassed within a learning and qualifications framework.

CQFW identified the need to explore the issues of: Recognition of Quality Assured Life Long Learning ((QALL): informal and non-formal learning)) for both young people and the adult workforce within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service. This aim takes forward CQFW's Key Action of:

"Develop Flexible and Responsive Learning Programmes for Learners post–14 in Wales" (CQFW: Handbook, 2007).

CQFW's key areas of activities in this area are:

i. Development of credit based Continuing Professional Development programmes.
ii. Develop systems and process for recognising Non-formal learning into CQFW.
iii. Develop systems and process for recognising Informal learning into CQFW.

The key areas of activity identified are mechanisms to take forward CQFW's goals which include among others: "Encouraging people to become life long learners" and "Promoting recognition of the skills required to support economic growth in Wales".

CQFW's goals are in alignment with Welsh Assembly Government's policy agendas for economic growth through development of knowledge and skills via life long learning. This Welsh Assembly Government policy agenda is evident in *One Wales* (2007), *Skills that Work for Wales* (2007), *Delivering Skills that Work for Wales: Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Wales* (2008, Consultation) and its draft *Adult Community Learning Policy* (2008, Draft).

The aims and goals of CQFW in relation to the Youth Service need to be understood within the context of the National Youth Service Strategy (WAG, 2007a). The "…enhancement of the ability of the Youth Service to deliver a wide range of non-formal learning opportunities for young people between the ages of 11–25 which they choose to engage in..." is a central aim of the Youth Service Strategy (WAG, 2007a, p. 3).

Non-formal learning experiences are thus central to the Youth Strategy and underpinning principles. To enable such an aim to be fulfilled the National Youth Service Strategy sets outs its aim to develop and expand its professional workforce. Identification of the accreditation needs of a 'professional' workforce would thus appear to be important issues to address as is highlighted by CQFW's goals and Key Actions.

In relation to young people the National Youth Strategy identifies clearly both principles of practice and expected outcomes which include the following:

> The Youth Service, with its positive view of young people, provides a unique learning environment built on the voluntary participation of young people and the quality of the relationship developed with a trained and skilled adult worker. The outcomes for young people from this environment can be identified within three broad themes: **active participation; wider skills development; and enhanced emotional competence.** (p. 7)

It is clear from the Youth Service Strategy that recognition and measurement of the outcomes identified for young people are complex —there is no expectation that all these outcomes will need to be recognised through accreditation. However it is recognised that:

> Formal accreditation and qualifications, including NVQs and OCNs which are recognised by the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), will continue to be important outcomes for some young people. (p. 8).

Additional measurement of young peoples experience is seen to be via tool kits such as "Demonstrating Success" which is being

trialled, tested and expanded on. Further it is also recognised that the outcomes from experiences gained through their involvement with the Youth Service will contribute to the non-formal strand of 14–19 Learning Pathways.

The maintained Youth Service sector is defined as where services are provided or secured by Local Authorities under Section 123 of the Learning and Skills Act (2000) and delivered according to the principles of the Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales (LLUK, 2008; Standing Conference, 2007; Rose, 2004).

The Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Service (CWVYS) provided the sample and access to the voluntary youth sector for the research. CWVYS is the umbrella organisation for the voluntary Youth Sector in Wales (CWVYS, 2008), its aims are:

> … to represent, support and give a collective voice to its membership of national and local organisations in their work with over 200,000 young people in Wales. CWVYS works in partnership with agencies promoting good youth work practice. (www.CWVYS.org.uk)

Membership is open to all voluntary youth work organisations that share CWVYS' objective 'To educate and help young persons to develop their physical, mental, cultural and spiritual capacities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society by facilitating mutual support and co-operation among voluntary youth organisations, the Youth Service and other related agencies in Wales.' (www.cwvys.org.uk)

Research Aim

The aim of the research is therefore to

- Explore the learning and accreditation needs for maintained and voluntary Youth Service provision in Wales—so as to understand the issues of the: recognition of informal and non-formal learning for both young people and the adult workforce through the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales.

Methodology and Methods Used

A qualitative and response research project was undertaken with stakeholders from the Youth Service, Statutory and Voluntary, so as to explore what the main issues, concerns and possible solutions are in relation to learning and accreditation within this sector.

Multiple sources of data collection and multiple perspectives were sought in the data collection methods and sample—therefore ensuring trustworthiness through data triangulation (Bryman, 2002; Robson, 2000; Stake 2000). The methods adopted were also seen to be the most appropriate way to gather information from this particular sector. Empirical data collection methods utilised were as follows (also see Figure: 2.1):

1) Initially informal interviews with stakeholders were carried out so as to focus the research and identify some key themes to explore further through in-depth semi-structured interviews and stakeholder research seminars / group interviews.
2) In depth individual semi-structured interviews were then carried out with both the voluntary and maintained sector

3) A Stakeholder research seminar enabled additional data to be collected.
4) Group interviews/ data collection were also utilised.
5) Documentary evidence provided further evidence to support and enhance other empirical data collected.

Key Findings, Recommendations and Areas for Future Research.

Key Findings

1. Recognition and Accreditation Issues in the Youth Service

It is evident that there are training opportunities available for the adult workforce both within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service. Gaps for both the maintained and voluntary sector however have been highlighted:

i. Maintained sector: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is seen to be an area for further attention within the maintained sector with a need for this training to be recognised and to be included within the structures of a coherent route to training.

ii. Voluntary sector: A high level of unqualified, and a high level of in house trained workers, had not undertaken training subjected to professional endorsement by the Education and Training Standards Committee or which was included on the National Qualifications Framework.

There are a number of opportunities available for young people to have their informal/non-formal learning recognised within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service. There is an opportunity for further recognition of their experiences within a single structure such as CQFW. It was felt by research participants that there was a need to value what opportunities already exist rather than invent new qualifications / awards.

The quality of training and opportunities for recognition of informal non-formal learning for adults and young people were raised by Estyn (2006; 2007. 2008–pers.comm).

2. Knowledge and Understanding of CQFW

Knowledge and understanding of CQFW was generally high within the sample. The majority of those who participated within the research however had previous knowledge through the work of a Senior CQFW officer and the majority were working at a senior strategic level and therefore engaged in the debates about recognition of informal and non-formal learning. Training officers were also familiar with credit as the result of working with OCN Wales modules and courses. However, understanding of the process and mechanisms of implementing CQFW and awarding credit was limited; the need for further support in this area was highlighted.

3. Potential Impacts of CQFW on the Youth Service

The impacts of adopting a credit based framework on both individual voluntary organisations and the maintained Youth Service were generally seen as positive with some caveats. The positive impacts were seen to be:

1) Added value and capacity to adult training within the voluntary sector.

2) Could offer an empowering model to adults and young people if utilised as a self assessment tool to see where strengths and areas for further development lie.

3) Provide a better service to young people 14–19 if can recognise their wider learning.

4) Comparability /transferability with formal qualifications.

5) Flexibility to meet a wide range of needs including those with additional needs.

4. Recognition of Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (informal non-formal learning)—challenges:

A number of challenges were outlined by both the voluntary and maintained Youth Service which includes the following:

1) Resources /Capacity.

2) Management / Understanding of the process of implementing CQFW to assign / or award credit.

3) Parity of esteem with formal qualifications.

4) Quality of the non-formal learning experience for young people and adults.

5) Retainment of principles and values of the Youth Service.

6) Marketing and wider understanding.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been highlighted:

1) In line with workforce development recommendations: “The training offered by the voluntary sector and the transferable skills it develops needs to be mapped against the Coherent Route and also National Occupational Standards”—***A credit framework could assist this process through allowing cross referencing between training to be more transparent*****.**

2) Address the need for recognition of CPD and past experience so it can feed into the coherent route for training—***CQFW could play an important role in achieving this.***

3) Ensure that there is recognition of training, accreditation opportunities and awards that are already available within both the maintained and voluntary Youth Service and how these can be utilised further to help both the adult work force and young people.

4) It would appear important to address the quality of training and accreditation opportunities; there is thus a need to explore how this can be managed effectively within the Youth Service for young people and the adult workforce.

5) It is evident within the research sample that knowledge of CQFW is apparent and in some cases well understood by those in strategic positions (such as the Principle Youth Officers Group; Training Officers Committee CWVYS). However, there is still a need to ensure that clear messages about the role, process and mechanisms of implementing

CQFW are made available and the processes people need to engage in to take forward the recognition of informal and non-formal learning are fully understood.

6) Feasibility studies for both the maintained and voluntary sector need to be undertaken. Feasibility studies would help to address the challenges highlighted in the research and how the positive impacts identified can be realised. This would allow CQFW's key actions to be taken forward.

7) There would appear to be a need for CQFW to look at how it can support the Youth Service and other sectors in achieving parity of esteem between informal and non-formal accreditation. CQFW, has a vital role to play in the management / overseeing and implementation of robust quality assured systems. This role is recognised by CQFW as evident from their handbook (CQFW 2006, 4: p10) which states:

> To develop Credit Common Accord and Quality Assurance process for non-formal Learning e.g Adult and Continuing Learning, In house Company Training and voluntary and community provision. (CQFW, 2006, 4:p.10)

How can this be implemented within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service? Offering parity in the recognition of achievement for learners of all ages, whether they are learning in the workplace, community, at school, college or university (CQFW, 2006, 1:p.3) is an aim of CQFW. The CQFW with three pillars (see figure 2 p.17) of learning is working towards developing mutual trust recognition and understanding between all pillars of learning.

8) A further recommendation would be to produce a Welsh version of the National Youth Agencies “National Framework of Awards in Non-formal Educational settings” and explore how youth awards can be credited rated utilising Scotland’s model of credit rating Scottish Youth Achievement Awards

9) There is also a need to explore how organisations / key stakeholders involved in, or which have influence on, the Youth Service can work more closely together to ensure a more coherent route to training/ workforce development which includes CQFW.

Areas for Future Research

1) ***Feasibility studies for both the maintained and voluntary Youth Services to explore all challenges identified and how the process can be implemented / managed.***

2) ***A broader analysis of the role of CQFW in managing and resourcing the QALL: informal / non-formal learning sector to enable the challenges identified to be addressed.***

3) ***A review of the National Youth Agencies “National Framework of Awards in Non-formal Educational settings.***

4) ***Explore how ETS and CQFW can work together.***

5) ***Engagement of Young People’s perspectives’***

6) ***Engagement of the wider workforce both paid and voluntary within the Youth Service.***

Introduction

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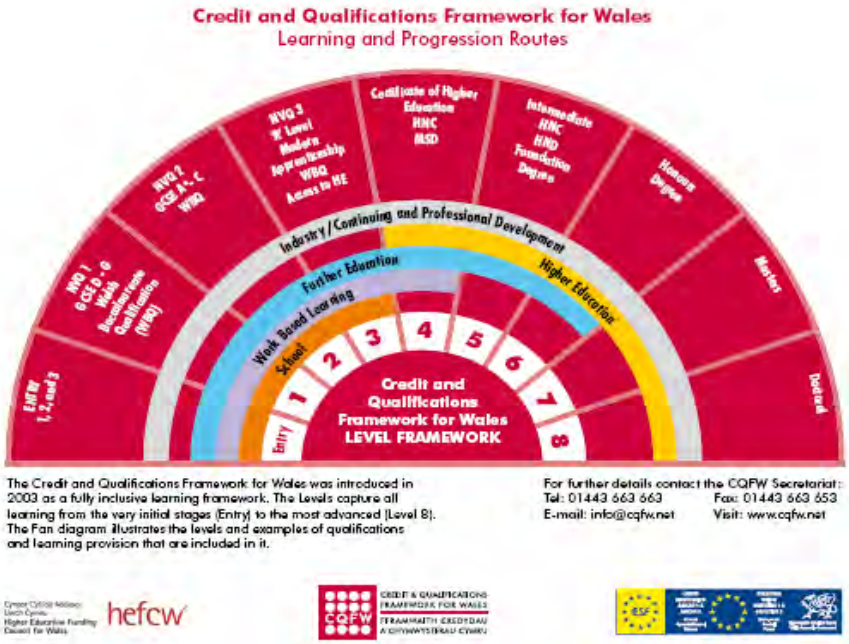
Figure 1


Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales
Learning and Progression Routes
Certificate of Higher Education HNC HSD
Intermediate HNC HND Foundation Degree
Honours Degree
Masters
Doctoral
NVQ 3 'A' Level Modern Apprenticeship WBQ Access to HE
NVQ 2 GCSE A*-C WBQ
NVQ 1 GCSE D - G Wales Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ)
Entry 1, 2 and 3
Industry/Continuing and Professional Development
Further Education
Higher Education
Work Based Learning
School
Entry
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales LEVEL FRAMEWORK
The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales was introduced in 2003 as a fully inclusive learning framework. The Levels capture all learning from the very initial stages (Entry) to the most advanced (Level 8). The Fan diagram illustrates the levels and examples of qualifications and learning provision that are included in it.
For further details contact the CQFW Secretariat:
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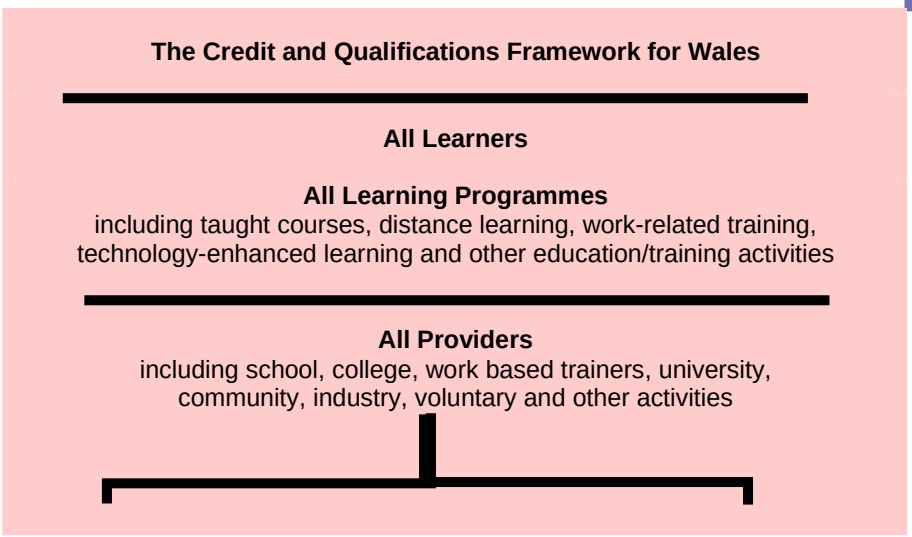
E-mail: info@cqfw.net
Visit: www.cqfw.net
hefcw
CQFW
CREDIT & QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR WALES
FFRAMWAITH CREDYDAU A CHYMWYSTERAU CYMRU

Figure 2 CQFW's Three Pillars of Learning :



Types of qualifications and learning opportunities		
Higher Education For example: • Degree • Masters • Post-Graduate studies • Doctorates	**General and Vocational Education & Training** For example: • GCSE • A Levels • NVQs • Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification	**Lifelong Learning** For example: • Adult and community learning • Company training • Voluntary Sector • Wider learning 14+
Learning and qualifications are organised into frameworks		
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications **FHEQ** (E,W,NI)	National Qualifications Framework **NQF** (EWNI) Qualifications and Credit Framework **QCF** (EWNI) Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework **SCQF**	Quality Assured Lifelong Learning **QALL**
Learning opportunities and standards are quality assured by		
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education **(QAA)**	DCELLS, Ofqual , CCEA and SCQF partnership	CQFW Recognised Bodies

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develop their physical, mental, cultural and spiritual capacities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society by facilitating mutual support and co-operation among voluntary youth organisations, the Youth Service and other related agencies in Wales.' (www.cwvys.org.uk)

The methodological approach adopted was a qualitative and response research design so as to ascertain in-depth empirical evidence in relation to the learning and accreditation needs for those involved in the maintained and voluntary youth sector. Multiple sources of data and multiple perspectives were sought in the data collection methods and sample—therefore ensuring trustworthiness through data triangulation (Bryman, 2002; Robson, 2000; Stake 2000). The methods adopted were also seen to be the most appropriate way to gather information from this particular sector. Empirical data collection methods utilised were as follows (Also see Figure: 4.1):

1) Initially informal interviews with stakeholders were carried out so as to focus the research and identify some key themes to explore further through in-depth semi-structured interviews and stakeholder research seminars / group interviews.
2) In depth individual semi-structured interviews were then carried out with both the voluntary and maintained sector.
3) A stakeholder research seminar enabled additional data to be collected.
4) Group interviews/ data collection were also utilised.
5) Documentary evidence provided further evidence to support and enhance other empirical data collected.

The report is divided into four sections:

1) Firstly, an overview of the context to the current research and its relevance to current political agendas is given.
2) Secondly, an outline of the methodological perspective and research methods adopted are presented.
3) Pen-ultimately, issues and themes arisen in phase one of the research are highlighted.
4) Lastly, key findings, recommendations and areas for further research are illustrated.

1. Context

In this section, the research aim is firstly contextualised within Welsh Assembly Government Policy Agendas. Secondly, the Youth Service skills gaps and issues of workforce development are addressed. Thirdly, the role of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales within this context is explored. Lastly, some issues that CQFW may need to consider in relation to the *"recognition of informal and non-formal learning for both young people and the adult workforce within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service"* are outlined.

1.1 Policy Context

The Social Exclusion agenda of the Labour Government (SEU, 1999; SEU, 2005) has been a central driver in UK Policy including Youth Policy. Solutions to social exclusion, it has been suggested, are based upon a model of labour force attachment—which is underpinned by a discourse about social integration (SID) in which paid work is represented as the primary or sole legitimate means of integrating individuals of working age into society (Levitas,1998; 2007). The SID model is evident within Welsh Assembly Government Policy. For example One Wales (2007a) emphasises:

> "…a strong and enterprising economy and full employment based on quality Jobs… Everyone must have the opportunity to achieve a reasonable standard of living, no matter where they live or what they do. Full employment supports and sustains communities in all parts of Wales and helps to tackle poverty and disadvantage wherever it occurs. (p.13).

Education is seen as a key driver in meeting the aim of an enterprising economy and full employment within *One Wales:*

> Our Vision is of a society in which learning throughout life is the norm, where people of Wales are actively engaged in acquiring new knowledge and skills from childhood to old age. (p.21)

Skills and employability are therefore high on the political agenda. Skills that Work for Wales (2007, Draft) is the Welsh Assembly Government's Skills and Employment Strategy which sets out a skills and employability vision that brings together the views in the Leitch Report on skills needs and the views of the Webb review on the readiness of our education and training sector to meet those needs. Issues identified in Skills that Work for Wales in relation to Adult and Community Learning and Young People "Not engaged in Education Employment and Training…(NEETS)" have resulted in two further draft policy consultations. The focus of the "Adult Community Learning policy is a recognition of the : *"key role that adult community learning can play in equipping individuals with the skills that will enable them to remain in, or re-enter, the workforce"* (p.1). Equally the focus of "Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Wales" is to:

> …to maximise participation in learning beyond the age of 16, our vision, as set out in One Wales is to transform learning provision for young people by providing attractive, flexible learning options matched by enhanced support and guidance" (p.1).

It is evident therefore that the focus for both adults and young people is to re-engage them in learning or employment within a wider framework beyond formal education.

The policy context for the Youth Service in Wales is also underpinned by the skills and employment agenda**.** The policy direction of the Welsh Assembly Government for youth services in

Wales can be found in the *Extending Entitlement* publications (NAW 2000, NAW 2001, WAG 2002). Their main purposes are to ensure young people are able to:

- Participate effectively in education and training;
- Take advantage of opportunities for employment;
- Participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities.

However, it would seem evident that the Youth Service is concerned with broader issues rather than the skills and employment agenda. Broader underpinning principles articulated in Youth policy distinguish the Youth Service further through delivering a non-formal educational approach; Rose (2008) illustrates this:

> A key component of the Extending Entitlement approach is the Youth Service which developed a national strategy (WAG 2007).The National Youth Service Strategy clearly identified the Youth Service in Wales as being underpinned by the following characteristics (which differentiate it from other services to young people):
>
> - the voluntary involvement by young people who have chosen to engage in the process;
> - being age specific, focused on 11-25 year olds;
> - a non-formal education approach;
> - being driven by a young people first approach;
> - an open access approach.

The strategy also described a range of outcomes for young people as a result of their involvement with the Youth Service within three **themes of active participation, wider skills development and enhanced emotional competence.**

It could be suggested that the while the Youth Service has a role to play within in the skills and employability agenda it is evident the Youth Service Strategy also has a rights based and civic agenda which is young people focused. The Welsh Assembly Government has adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a basis of all of its work with children and young people (NAW 2000, cited in Rose, 2008). These rights were translated into seven core aims which were used as the basis for the Strategy for Children and young people (WAG 2004) and also for the establishment of an independent Children's Commissioner for Wales in 2001. In addition Youth Services in Wales are linked to a wide range of other policy documents including for example 14-19 Learning Pathways, Children and Young People; Rights to Action, The Learning Country: Vision into Action and Delivering Beyond the Boundaries (Beecham) (After, Rose, 2008). .

To address policy aims of skills and employability there has been a significant review of the current workforce within the adult community learning sector. A scoping exercise has also been carried out by the Youth Service to identify workforce and other resource gaps to enable the National Youth Strategy for Wales' aims to be implemented.

1.2 Workforce Development

An evaluation of workforce development issues illustrates current workforce profiles and identifies apparent gaps within the workforce of the maintained and voluntary sector. The Workforce Development Strategy was signposted as Priority 6 (p. 27) in the Welsh Assembly Government consultation document: Towards a National Youth Service Strategy for Wales (Nov 2006) (LLUK, 2008, p. 3). The National Youth Service Strategy for Wales (2007) sets out Key Action Points in relation to workforce development

and these key actions along with recent scoping and audit research reports highlight what gaps there are in relation to workforce development.

The maintained sector it would appear is in a much stronger position in terms of workforce in relation to the recognition of its "professional training" which is recognised on the National Qualifications Framework,—however recognition of Continuous Professional Development is seen to be an issue for them. The National Youth Service Strategy for Wales (2007) key Action Points in relation to workforce development were:

- The Youth Service Strategy (WAG, 2007, p.20) has set a target of 90% of the fulltime workforce to be qualified to JNC Professional[1] level qualification.
- The Youth Strategy (WAG, 2007, p. 21) has set a target of 90% of the part-time workforce to be qualified to Youth Support Worker[2] level 1 or 2.

LLUK (2008) in a recent piece of research commissioned by Welsh Assembly Government: Youth Strategy Branch on "Skills Issues in the Youth Service "concluded that:

- The workforce has a high level of education with the majority qualified to HE below degree and above in both the maintained and voluntary sectors the picture presented is: Nine percent (n=128) of workers are qualified to higher degree level, 25% (n=339) to degree level and a further 22% (n=339) to higher education qualifications below degree;

These figures are supported further by the Youth Service Audit (LGDU, 2007) which identified that (after Rose, 2008):

[1] Professional Youth Worker / Nationally Qualified = BA/Post Grad/Diploma HE in Youth & community /Teacher Trained pre-1988

[2] Youth Support Worker /Locally Qualified= Foundation Course/ QCA4/NOCN/NVQ2/NVQ3

- A significant increase in the numbers of qualified workers within the local authority sector from 43% in 2003-04 to 75% in 2006-07. This shows a clear progression towards the target of 90% qualified workers at professional level and youth support worker level identified in both the National Youth Service Strategy and the Standards document for the maintained Youth Service;

Therefore while there is still room for improvement in relation to meeting the Target of 90% the trend is positive.

Continuous Professional Development with the maintained Youth Service has been highlighted as an issue to address in the draft workforce development plan (2008): "A framework for the development of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) process for Youth Workers at all levels within the service" (2008). Research by LLUK (2007) on skills issues within the Community Learning and Development sector which includes Youth work also identified the need to: "Develop an integrated CPD framework and model for the lifelong learning sector, where appropriate".

The voluntary sector appears to lack the formal recognition of training / learning experiences that they engage in. An evaluation of training of CWVYS membership in 2005 suggests that all member organisations have induction and training for all adult leaders both voluntary and paid. It is suggested in the report that the training is either equated to or is equivalent to recognised youth work qualifications. The Youth Service Strategy does appear to recognise that there are alternative routes to training for the voluntary Youth Service however it still proposes that training should be linked to the coherent route for training which suggests that it needs to have some formal recognition; this is illustrated by

the Key action for the voluntary sector outlined in The Youth Strategy (WAG, 2007, p. 20):

> "…a target of 90% of those working in the voluntary Youth Service Sector to hold an appropriate qualification as determined by the sectors standards linked to the coherent route of training".

The Youth Service scoping exercise however (LGDU, 2007), suggest that there is an extremely low level of professionally qualified workers at Headquarters and Regional offices of the voluntary youth sector. The figures for the voluntary sector (LGDU, 2007, p. 4) suggest that of 5, 398 staff that are working in the voluntary sector, at least 21% hold an appropriate qualifications, 47 % have received own organisations training and 29% hold no relevant qualification. Rose (2008), raises the issue that this training has not been subject to Professional Endorsement by the Education and Training Standards Committee, neither is it included on the National Qualifications Framework. As a consequence, the issue of equivalence of training both in terms of quality and content across National Voluntary Youth Organisations is suspect.

The workforce development plan (Draft, 2008) for the Youth Service also highlights the voluntary sector gap in relation to CPD and the need to map this activity if equivalence is to occur:

> Definition of the Coherent route and the mapping of CPD activity appropriate to the levels to demonstrate transferable skills across the voluntary and maintained sectors.

In light of Rose's comments (ibid) would this need to be carried out within appropriate professional endorsement guidelines?

Workforce issues across those who work with Children and Young People and those who fall under Adult Community Learning and Development which includes Youth Work are also being explored

by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and the Children & Young People's Workforce Development Network (C&YPWFDN) They both highlight key areas of development for this sector. One of the aims of the work of the C&YPWFDN is to develop an 'Integrated Qualifications Framework' (IQF) which includes the following:

1. Enable transferability of qualifications across employers, training, providers and sectors in the children's workforce.
2. Building bridges between the vocational and academic elements of career pathways, within the career available in the sector. Leading to a coherent route of progression for individuals within one area of work, or across different areas within that workforce.
3. Links between the 14-19 agenda and skills review: clear career frameworks and career pathways within sectors.
4. The work of developing an IQF will then flow from the work of creating a comprehensive career pathway which will identify difficulties faced by workers in attempting to move from one part of the workforce to another without having to retrain extensively.
5. It is suggested that by using and expanding the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales , this could be achieved by ensuring that the credit of differing qualifications are recognised and that this embedding of the CQFW will lead to the accreditation of other non-formal qualifications, training and experience, enabling ease of movement for individuals wishing to progress within the sector.

LLUK (2007) have identified a number of issues during their analysis of the Community Learning and Development sector which includes Youth workers, they highlight the need to:

1. Explore the options for 'professionalising' all parts of the Lifelong Learning Work force.

2. Develop an integrated CPD framework and model for the lifelong learning sector, where appropriate
3. Develop sector wide career paths
4. Recruitment programmes to address specific shortages in LL sector.

The workforce issues highlighted by the C&YPWFDN and LLUK could have a number of implications for the Youth Service workforce and also identify the role that CQFW can play in aiding the process.

The overall workforce development picture suggests that there is still work to be carried out in engaging people in appropriate training in the voluntary sector: the need for the training offered by the voluntary sector and the transferable skills it develops to be mapped against the Coherent Route and also National Occupational Standards (Workforce development plan Draft, 2008). Within the maintained sector while training at professional level has improved it still needs to reach 90% which is identified in The Youth Service Strategy. Recognition of CPD is noted as a gap for the maintained sector and how it relates to the coherent route for training. The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales is identified within the Youth Service Strategy, however, what role it could play is not made explicit. It is therefore clear that there are a number of issues identified in the literature for the adult workforce and thus there is a need to explore them further and analyse the role CQFW can play in the process.

1.3 The Role of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales would appear to have an important role to play within the current political agenda of skills and employability. CQFW is highlighted in Skills that work for Wales as a mechanism to take forward their agenda:

> A core part of this more responsive structure will be the rollout of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), a new way of recognising achievement that will underpin all future learning in Wales. The CQFW will help us to respond to the widespread demand, from learners and employers, for the recognition of small, focused episodes of learning (WAG, 2007, p.4).

The Youth Service strategy, Children & Young People's Workforce Development Network, and Life Long Learning UK also all highlight CQFW's role in supporting their key actions within workforce development. The consultation report on "Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Wales" (2008a), further highlights the importance of CQFW for Young people:

> We are already reforming the qualifications framework to ensure there is the right range of provision to meet young people's needs and provide them with the skills they need for work and for life. All future vocational qualifications used across England, Wales and Northern Ireland will have credit as an integral element, forming a part of the wider Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). Credit is important because not everyone wants or is able to study for a full qualification. Credit is a new way of recognising achievement that will enable learners to work towards

> qualifications in small steps and at their own pace, receiving credit for completing accredited short courses, on-the-job training and even informal learning. (WAG 2008a, p.30).

The Goal of Learning Pathways 14–19 (1 & 11, Guidance (WAG, 2004 / 2006 p.15)) is that: *"95 per cent of young people by the age of 25 will be ready for high skilled employment or higher education by 2015"* (p. 6.)—to achieve this goal the aim is to

> …extend choice and flexibility: securing individually tailored learning pathways that meet learner's needs; and providing richer opportunities and experiences that will help learners develop the wider skills they need for life and work. (WAG, 2006, p. 6)

Each learner's Learning Pathway will thus have a combination of formal, non-formal and informal elements (WAG, 2004/6, p. 15),—many of the experiences which might constitute a balance between formal, non-formal and informal learning outlined in WAG guidelines include experiences that young people engage in through the Youth Service. CQFW credit achievements are recognised within the document.

CQFW therefore has an important role to play within the current political agenda of skills and employability—CQFW key goals are in alignment with the Welsh policy context:

> "…single Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales underpins five key goals:

1) Enabling everyone to develop and maintain essential skills;
2) Encouraging people to become life long learners;
3) Exploiting the knowledge in businesses and educational institutions;
4) Encouraging business and workers to gain new skills; and

5) Helping people within their communities to develop new skills.

This is achieved through:

1) Supporting the development of an inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential;
2) Assisting in removing barriers to progression;
3) Promoting recognition of the skills required to support economic growth in Wales; and
4) Offering parity in the recognition for leaner's of all ages, whether they are learning in the workplace, and community at school, college or university.

CQFW's aims and key actions illustrates its strategic relevance in relation to the Youth Service in terms of both the adult workforce and Young People's experiences: Key action 1 "Develop Flexible and responsive Learning Programmes for Leaner's Post 14 in Wales" has associated with it three key areas of activity that have been highlighted in relation to the adult work force and young people within the literature and policy context explored , this is further illustrated in Figure 1.1:

Figure 1.1: CQFW Key Activity Areas.

CQFW Key Area of Activity	**Relevance to Youth Service Context**
Development of credit based Continuing Professional Development programmes.	CPD highlighted as a key area within the Youth Service Work force Development Strategy (2008, Draft).
Develop systems and process for recognising Non-formal learning into CQFW.	• The Youth Service Audit illustrates the lack of recognition of training that occurs in the Voluntary Sector • Young People Engage in non-formal education within a context of the Extending Entitlement / social Inclusion Agenda—thus recognition of this learning would appear important.
Develop systems and process for recognising Informal learning into CQFW	• The Youth Service Audit illustrates the lack of recognition of training that occurs in the Voluntary Sector

While it is thus evident that CQFW can contribute to the area of : "Recognition of Quality Assured Life Long Learning ((QALL): informal and non-formal learning)) *within the maintained and*

voluntary Youth Service", it needs to take on board a number of issues that may affect such a framework being fully embedded.

1.4 Challenges

It is evident that CQFW has a role to play in recognising learning within the Youth Service maintained and voluntary—however, there are some issues of commensurability between underpinning agendas that influence the Youth Service and its role, which need to be taken into consideration so as to ensure CQFW is sensitive to the debates and thus challenges it may face. It has been highlighted that skills and employability are key agendas that currently influence the Youth Service and there is a role for CQFW in assisting this key agenda as is identified by Skills that Work for Wales. To work effectively with this sector the underpinning principles of the Youth Service, as identified in the Youth Strategy would need to be taken into consideration. These principles include:

- the voluntary involvement by young people who have chosen to engage in the process;
- being age specific, focused on 11-25 year olds;
- a non-formal education approach;
- being driven by a young people first approach;
- an open access approach.

(WAG,2007a).

A further issue that would need to be considered is that there appears to be no statutory base for the Youth Service to provide recognition through qualifications in Wales or England as Rose (2004) illustrates:

> The Learning and Skills Act (2000) (HMSO 2000) with reference to Section 2 of the Education Act 1966, *organised*

> *leisure-time occupation* as it is interpreted in Wales, as covering a wide range of organised activities offering opportunities for non-formal types of learning which do not **necessarily** lead to a qualification. The interpretation of the term in England describes the phrase as meaning covering a range of activities offering the opportunities for non-formal types of learning, which **does not** lead to a qualification. (p.3).

This issue of recognition is possibly particularly relevant to the 14–19 Learning Pathway Agenda and the recognition of wider learning, as some in the Youth Service ***could argue*** that this is not the aim of the Youth Service.

Some would also argue that current youth policy and current Government policy are at the detriment of the Youth Service—Smith (2003) suggests that:

> …managerial and bureaucratic thinking, and the ideologies of market economics have come to dominate politics and policy. As Rowan Williams (2002) has argued, government has become increasingly technocratic and oriented to voters as consumers (Smith, 2003).

In particular it is suggested the primary aims of the Youth Service identified in the Albemarle Report in 1960 of association, training and challenge are becoming eroded,—Smith (2001), argues:

> There is some question as to whether many youth services […] are actively involved in youth work. In particular, there has been a loss of faith in associational forms of work, a move towards certification and vocationalism (and the adoption of more formal educational forms), and continuing failure to address demographic and social shifts in the experience of ‘youth’. (p.1)

In Wales it can be seen from the Youth Work Strategy that there are clear underpinning principles that make a distinctive Youth Service, and it is also felt that Extending Entitlement promotes a "universal " approach to working with young people which is seen to be in contrast to England's more targeted approach (Holmes, 2001).

While the National Youth Strategy for Wales does not focus on accreditation issues Smith (2003) further suggests that there are a number of dangers associated with accreditation which include:

- It alters the focus of activity in a way that undermines the informal and convivial nature of youth work
- Workers will be under pressure to look to those activities that have an obvious outcome rather than having faith in the benefits of building relationships, process and relationship itself (see below).
- We are also likely to see a further increase in 'two bit' certification - the giving of awards and certificates of little worth and meaning.
- The overall result is an alteration in the balance of work within youth services between the formal and the informal.

➢ **Delivery rather than relationship**. Organising work around concepts like outcome, curriculum and issue means there is a danger of overlooking what lies at the heart of youth work.

➢ **Bureaucratisation**:

o For some years the adoption of so-called 'professionalism' has contributed to an embracing of a

bureaucratic orientation. The result can often tend to fail to give proper space to taking account of the particular circumstances, and to undermine key aspects of youth work (e.g. around spontaneity and informality).

- Alongside this there has been a growing marginalisation of the role of the volunteer in some services. The emphasis on policy and procedure and upon professional language and competence has worked to devalue their contribution.

- One of the largest increases in bureaucratic activity brought about by the new specification will be in the necessity of keeping and processing the records necessary to evidence and accredit learning (in relation to England)..

The National Youth Service Strategy, while it does not focus on accreditation as in England, does refer to outcomes and targets in terms of what services have to achieve and the measurement of these achievements. The implication for CQFW could be that the issues highlighted by Smith will need to be taken into consideration when dealing with the Youth Service.

1.5 Concluding Comments

Within the policy context agenda's of the Welsh Assembly Government, and the skills gaps identified within the Youth Service it is clear that CQFW has a role to play in the *: "Recognition of Quality Assured Life Long Learning ((QALL): informal and non-formal learning)) for both young people and the adult workforce within the maintained and voluntary youth service*". It is thus an

opportune time for CQFW to engage in research within the areas of the Youth Service, and Community and Adult Learning, and with young people to take forward its key actions. However, within this positive context the caveats and challenges highlighted will also need to be considered fully.

2. Methodology

Section two will highlight the overall methodological perspective adopted to carry out the research, the research methods utilised and the research sample size that contributed to the empirical data collection. Examples of research tools can be found in the appendix.

2.1 Methodological Perspective

A qualitative and responsive research methodology is utilised in the research. This involves working alongside key stakeholders from the Youth Service, Maintained and Voluntary, so as to gain an insight to what the main issues, concerns and possible solutions are in relation to learning and accreditation within this sector: recognition of informal and non-formal learning for the adult workforce and young people through the Credit and qualifications Framework for Wales.

The qualitative study follows a fourth generation evaluation model based upon a constructivist methodology. Fourth generation evaluation is a form of evaluation in which the claims, concerns, and issues of stakeholders serve as organisational foci (the basis for determining what information is needed) (Guba & Lincoln, 1989 p. 50.; 2000; 2005). The framework of a constructivist methodology provides warrant to consider emic [insider viewpoint] constructions of stakeholders legitimate, rather than regarding them simply as biased perceptions: " The claims, concerns and issues of stakeholders, together with whatever may be substantially implied by them, constitute the "stuff" of which their constructions are made" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 185). The aim is to develop judgemental consensus among stakeholders, who earlier may have

held different, perhaps conflicting, emic constructions, which result in a picture of current needs and recommendations to be highlighted.

The methodological choice is strongly based upon the principle that to collect meaningful data from both the voluntary and maintained Youth Service appropriate data collection methods should be adopted that are in tune with their underpinning principles of practice. Thus the methodology adopted ensures that the stakeholders have an opportunity to contribute fully during the data collection process and are empowered in identifying and raising their own solutions to their problems. A qualitative study is adopted so as to complement the extensive quantitative audit of the Youth Service in Wales (2007) and to address some of the keys issues identified.

2.2 Data Collection Methods and Sample Size

Three main methods of data collection were adopted:

1. individual interviews, ***n=37*** (see appendix 1 for interview schedules)
2. seminars / group interviews ***n=4*** (see appendix 2 for seminar and group interview data collection)
3. documentary analysis.

Such multiple sources of evidence contributes to the trustworthiness of data collection through providing ***data triangulation*** (Bryman, 2002; Robson, 2000; Stake 2000).

Participation in data collection was based upon a purposive sample. A purposive or theoretical sample size is consistent with a qualitative study (Bryman, 2001; Guba & Lincoln 1981; 1989; Robson, 2002); it allows the researcher to optimize learning from

the evaluand through identifying the main issues and concerns for a particular group in this case the Youth Service sector.

Figure 2.1 outlines the sample within the voluntary and maintained sector that participated in the research. As can be seen from figure 2.1 the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Service (CWVYS) formed the basis of the sample for the voluntary sector; CWVYS is the umbrella organisation in Wales for the voluntary sector. As figure 2.1 illustrates the Principle Youth Officers and Training Officers representing the four regional training groups in Wales formed the basis of the maintained sector sample. It was initially intended to attend all regional training group meetings to meet with all training officers; however this proved difficult and as a result the contribution from training officers was not as broad as it could have been—however there is representation from all four regions in Wales. Multiple perspectives are therefore evident within the sample size,—thus contributing further to the triangulation of evidence.

Figure 2.1: Empirical Data: Sample

Data Collection	Anticipated Sample	Actual Sample
1. Research Seminar	• All Voluntary Sector members of CWVYS invited • All Training Officers in the maintained sector invited	16 participants 12 of which were CWVYS Training Officer Committee Members, 2 were from the maintained sector
2. Group Interviews (formal and informal)	• Principles Youth Officers Group • CWVYS Training Committee • Students engaged in training • 4 x Regional Training Groups (Maintained Sector)	• Principle Youth Officers Group ***n=22*** • CWVYS ***n=8*** • Students engaged in training ***n=5*** • 5 individual interviews.
3. Individual interviews	• *N=30*	• N=37

The empirical data collection followed six stages so as to be responsive to emerging issues and concerns identified by the key stakeholders. The stages illustrate a further trustworthiness criterion of member checking / respondent validation. Member checks / respondent validation involves the process of testing hypothesis, data, preliminary categories, and interpretations with members of the stake holding groups from whom the original constructions were collected; Guba and Lincoln (1989: p 239) suggest that this is the single most crucial technique for establishing credibility of research.

Stage 1: Identifying Stakeholders: Gatekeepers / Eliciting Concern and issues

The first stage in the research involved identifying who the stakeholders or gatekeepers to the research were, what the main concerns and issues for these stakeholders were; and assistance

in identifying other stakeholders that should be involved. A stakeholder is understood in this context as:

> The relevant audiences whose concerns and issues are to be the focus of the evaluation have been defined as those persons and groups that have some stake in the performance, outcome, or impact of the evaluand. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981 p. 306)

A number of initial interviews were carried out with those knowledgeable about the area and who were able to allow access to other stakeholders:

- Six initial informal interviews with key players / informers from the sector:
    - Welsh Assembly Government division responsible for this area n= 4
    - Voluntary Sector Chief Executive / Training group Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Service
    - Local Authority Principle Youth Officers: responsible for the Statutory Youth Service —Chair of PYO group
    - LLUK
    - CCW

A number of relevant documents were analysed to help to identify the issues that need to be explored further in the research. Such documentary analysis is an accepted method of data collection (Bryman, 2001; Guba & Lincoln 1981; 1989; Robson, 2002; Stake, 2000),

Analysis of the data collected at this stage is carried out concurrently with data collection. Guba and Lincoln (1989) illustrate how during this first phase of data collection the

researcher is concerned with uncovering items of information that appear, on their face, to be relevant to the study's focus. Only broad ranging questions are asked of these sources, so that the respondent (or document) can offer up testimony in its own terms:

> In effect, the inquirer says, "Tell me the questions I ought to be asking and then answer them for me". General Reponses of this sort are analyzed as soon as they are obtained, so that they become part of the agenda in all subsequent data collection. (p. 178).

Stage 2: Member checking / Respondent validity

Key informants were asked to be a part of a steering group / stakeholder group the aim of which is to ensure that the research is responsive to the needs of the sector so that it is inclusive and also as a mechanism for further analysis and data collection. This approach to involvement in the research process is in line with a constructivist hermeneutic cycle of data collection and analysis. One of the main roles for the group are to comment upon the Issues that have arisen in stage one thus influencing further data collection at later stages. This further ensures the trustworthiness criterion of member checking/ respondent validity is built in to the process at an early date.

Stage 3. Collection of further information in relation to themes

Stages one and two identified key issues or themes to explore with other stakeholders; further data collection based upon these themes was carried out: see figure 4.1 for overview of data collection.

Stage 4. Analysis of data collected —Identification of any unresolved issues and concerns

Analysis of data carried out by thematic analysis following grounded theory principles (Bryman, 2001; Guba & Lincoln 1981; 1989; Stake, 2000; Robson, 2002). This involves categorizing the data based upon the key themes and issues that arise from the data collected.

Stage 5. Feedback analysis of data; Collect further information on any unresolved issues: further interviews, seminars; gain some consensus on issues and resolutions recommendations.

Data collection and analysis has resulted in the identification of several themes in relation to the aim of the study which was to: understand the issues of the recognition of informal and non-formal learning for both young people and the adult workforce within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service. The themes based on empirical data collection are outlined within section 3.

3. Results: Key Themes

The empirical data collected has been analysed so as to present a picture of the key themes that have emerged from the research. The key themes presented below are based upon the data collected as outlined in figure 2.1 section 2. In total over 15,000 words of transcribed data were analysed,—outlined here is a sample of this data so as to illustrate the key points summarised in Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4. Key findings and recommendations can be found in section 4.

3.1 Recognition and Accreditation issues in the Youth Service

Three main issues were highlighted in the research regarding general recognition and accreditation issues. The three issues and summary of empirical data that supports these issues are outlined in figure 3.1.; qualitative quotes are presented to illustrate them further.

Figure 3.1. Summary Empirical Evidence: Recognition and Accreditation issues in the Youth Service

	EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE SOURCE			
Issue	**Individual Interviews**	**Group Interviews**	**Research Seminar**	**Documents**
1) Training and Accreditation Opportunities	All interviews in the maintained and voluntary sector highlight opportunities available for both young people and adults	PYO: identified accreditation opportunities for young people	Highlight opportunities available for both young people and adults	Workforce development Plan Training Audit CWVYS LLUK ESTYN
2) Recognition of accreditation already available	The need to recognise and give value to current accreditation opportunities already available within the voluntary and maintained sector for both Adults and Young People			
3) Gaps	i. Recognition of CPD ii. Measures of non-formal learning against formal learning iii. Mapping of voluntary training into coherent route for training			

1) Training and Accreditation Opportunities

Voluntary Sector: The training available within the voluntary sector for the adult workforce is seen to be comprehensive and a survey of training (2005) suggests all CWVYS member organisations engage in training. The recognition of this training beyond the organisation would seem to vary, e.g Girl Guides are Piloting an OCN in Leadership, the Scouts utilise OCN for some of their training, however this training does not necessarily fit into the National Coherent Route for training for Youth Workers. Other voluntary organisations such as the YMCA College utilise OCNs for

adult training and offer a Youth Support Worker level 3 which does correspond to the National Coherent Route of Training. This training is taken up across the voluntary and maintained sectors. Levels of professional training are emphasised in LLUK's research (2008) as an issue:

> *Both a high level of unqualified workers and a high level of in-house trained workers who had not undertaken training subjected to professional endorsement by the Education and Training Standards Committee or which was included on the National Qualifications Framework.*

Maintained Sector: Training opportunities within the maintained sector would seem to be comprehensive. They appear to utilise OCNs, FE and HE which form part of the National Coherent Route to training (see Appendix 3):

> *"We already have robust training routes which are related to the coherent route for training"*
>
> (Interview: Maintained Sector)"

While there are opportunities for training, it has been highlighted by Estyn (2006, 2007) that from their current inspections to date: *"Training does not yet impact on the quality of service delivery".* There are however a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration in particular the: "skills deficit and recruitment crisis" Estyn (2006). The issue of recruitment and engaging the workforce in training was raised by training officers and a number of barriers were highlighted which included: funding, progression routes, people already holding first degrees in another subject areas (e.g. Teachers, social workers):

Engaging people in training within the maintained sector and recruitment issues were also highlighted by training officers interviewed:

> *… Coherent route: Numbers drop of significantly at Certificate level [level 4 Higher Education] people have to take a leap of faith as not necessarily job opportunities in the maintained or voluntary sector…… There are issues of progression and pay and people understanding progression routes. Also the value of the profession.*

(Interview: Maintained Sector)

LLUK also highlighted in their recent research on the Youth Service (2008) "…that high numbers of part time staff within the maintained sector brings about challenges in relation to work force training and development" (LLUK, 2008 p. 37). .

Accreditation opportunities for young people are also evident both within the maintained and voluntary sector:

Maintained Youth Service: There are a number of opportunities available for young people to have their informal/non-formal learning recognised: examples given were the Children's University, Princes Trust, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Personal Achievement Awards, Key Skills, Basic skills, Community Champion OCNs, ASDAN awards, Mayors Award, Work Experience, Getting Connected, Youth Achievement Awards.

It has been identified by Estyn that the monitoring and utilisation of such recognition of learning through recognised accreditation schemes within Local Authority Youth Service is often poor:

> *In the few settings where accredited learning opportunities exist, we see a good range of options e.g. Youth*

Achievement Awards Open College Networks (OCN), Mayors Award, Duke of Edinburgh Award. It is however often unclear how many young people undertake these schemes. Inspection evidence suggests that only small numbers of young people are supported to take part in accredited opportunities. In many cases the opportunity to recognise Young People's progress are available but staff do not make best use of it. Staff in these settings do not understand that accreditation can help young people to access further opportunities in employment, education and training. (Estyn (2006).

2) Recognition of Training

Recognition of accreditation already available to young people was highlighted as important in all aspects of the data collected (see = figure 3.1): It was highlighted in the research seminar that:

> *… the training provided by the voluntary service is of high quality and already approved, there is no need to reinvent qualifications but to approve what is currently being delivered by the voluntary sector i.e. give a credit value to qualifications by scouts/guides etc. etc. There would need to be a Mapping exercise – which is a massive undertaking—National Youth Agency have a good example of mapping of this available….*

A number of individual interviews reiterated this point:

> "There are accreditation opportunities at the moment within the voluntary sector for young people and adults which need to be recognised and appreciated more fully…"

(Interview: Voluntary sector)

3. Gaps in Training

A number of gaps were highlighted in training and recognition of learning experiences:

The draft Welsh Assembly Government Workforce Development Plan, and interviews with ***all*** the training officers from the maintained sector, highlighted that Continual Professional Development and recognition of prior experience were a priority for them:

> *"However other areas we need to capture and gain recognition for are:*
>
> a. *Informal learning---trying to measure people's experience against skills and knowledge we need a skills and knowledge booklet. Would like to see that people informal learning their experiences through for example a reflective practice element*
> b. *We need a way of recognising CPD and past experience into the coherent route*
> c. *Also we need to map voluntary training into the coherent route ("this should be a study in itself)" as there is a great importance of mapping across into the coherent route.*
> d. *Process of licensing youth workers is interesting as suggested by LLUK (see workforce development stuff) We could give credit at different levels of licensing which could then also fit into the coherent route. However the issue is who does this who has the capacity and QA to be*

able for this to happen? Could not CQFW and ETS what is this?work together?

e. *Barriers: getting training aligned to CPD we would have to be able to measure and demonstrate where going this a credit based system would be helpful but again how do you measure it and who does this? Could CQFW do this have centres for excellence for training?*
f. *Measuring experience CPD ect important core aims of Children's and Young people's plans is measurement"*

(Interview: maintained sector*)*

Recognition of voluntary sector training as highlighted above is variable, while the seminar, interviews and documents identified the need to look at transferability issues between the voluntary sector and the Coherent Route for training. The process of doing this was not explored apart from establishing that "a mapping exercise may need to take place to assist this process".

3.2 Knowledge and Understanding of CQFW

Participants in the research had varying degrees of knowledge and understanding of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales and or Credit based awards. The Principle Youth Officers Group, CWVYS Chief Executive and CWVYS Training Committee members were aware of the Credit and Qualifications Framework as they had engaged with CQFW Officers previously. As a result of the research process I also raised awareness of CQFW. Training Officers interviewed in both the maintained and voluntary sector had varying degrees of knowledge and understanding as is

outlined in figure 3.2. Those who knew more about credit were already utilising credit in their training through awarding bodies namely OCN and NOCN. These organisations were involved in organising and delivering training e.g. YMCA College, Youth Cymru and maintained Youth Service training officers.

The mechanisms and process of utilising a credit framework was however less well understood. This is evident in the issues outlined in Figure **3.2.** and highlighted further in the challenges and barriers identified (see section 4.4.2) and summed up by the following quotes taken from the voluntary and maintained sector:

> *"… whole idea of credit and hours is not fully understood, and it's a huge issue to get this across…. A lot of organisations we work with don't understand credit so we run a 3 credit module on understanding OCN credit system.*

(Interview: Voluntary Sector).

> *"…organisations are not a barrier but there is a challenge of what credit is and how it can be embedded in your organisation—need to embed a new culture into an organisation and make it easier for them. There has to be systems that are not bureaucratic…"*

(Interview: Voluntary Youth Sector)

> *"… there is a lack of understanding of levels and how credit is awarded…is it possible to recognise all young people's learning who would do this?"*

(Interview: Maintained sector).

Figure 3.2.: Summary Empirical Evidence: Knowledge and Understanding of CQFW

Empirical Evidence Source	Level of Knowledge
Individual Interviews: Voluntary Training Officers *n= 12*	*Flexible learning that can be transferable.* *Good Knowledge I see the important of equivalence and measuring. Important that recognition and credit is given to learning.*
Individual Interviews: Voluntary Training Officers *n= 7*	*Familiar with OCNs but issues issue of currency raised as not on the NQF—*
Individual Interviews: Voluntary Training Officers *n= 6*	*Something that would lead to qualifications, comes with some status e.g recognition of it—employers recognising it,*
Individual Interviews: Voluntary Training Officers *n= 2*	*Mapping of non-formal awards to recognised formal awards and credit based awards e.g. National Youth Agency*
Maintained Youth Service Training Officer 1 Training Officer 2 Training Officer 3 Training Officer 4	*Familiar with credit as worked with OCNs for a long time.* *Credit framework understood it from CPD discussions and workforce development and children's University an opportunity to build credit and to value experience as well as accredited experiential learning—it can bring credits.* *Using credits is a positive step but it is important to be clear about levels and outcomes ect…*
Principle Youth Officers	*Understand the aim and the benefits however:* *Need to see what the admin is going to look like: forms , methods, process management common currency*
CWVYS	*Training committee already engaged in the debate .It is about the 14-19 agenda "if we had more to go an offer the 14-19 agenda then we could say you have to take notice of this.*

3.3 Potential Impacts of CQFW on the Youth Service

The impacts of adopting a credit based framework on both individual voluntary organisations and the maintained Youth Service were generally seen as positive although a number of caveats were identified (for challenges see section 3.4). Figure 4.3. summarises the potential impacts which are illustrated further with direct quotes from the research participants below.

Figure 3.3. Summary Empirical Evidence: Potential Impacts of CQFW on the Youth Service

	EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE SOURCE			
Positive Impacts	**Individual Interviews**	**Group Inter-views**	**Research Seminar**	**Documents**
1) Added value and capacity to adult training within the voluntary sector.	Interviews with the voluntary sector=8	CWVYS		
2) Empowering	Interview with one HEI provider Individual interviews voluntary sector n=3	CWVYS		
3) Provide a better service to Young People 14–19 if can recognise their wider learning	Most Individual Interviews with voluntary and maintained youth sector	CWVYS PYO group	Highlighted as a benefit	CQFW mentioned ir Youth Strate LLUK
4) Comparability /transferability with formal qualifications.	Most Individual Interviews with voluntary and maintained youth sector	PYO CWVYS	Highlighted as a benefit	National You Agency Booklet: *National Framework o Awards in No formal Educational settings.*
5) Flexibility to meet a wide range of needs including those with additional needs.	Individual Interviews with voluntary and maintained youth sector	CWVYS PYO CWVYS		

1) **Added value and capacity to adult training within the voluntary sector.**

The voluntary interviewees in particular highlighted the added value it could to their work with adults:

> *Particularly useful for training adults as this is a unique field of Welsh Language Youth Work and we have a large turn over of staff—so the having the training recognised would help to give this training added value"*

> *" Add value to our services on a wider level it could widen the benefits of welsh medium accreditation in this area and make it more of a norm—it could make it a better service to over 14s and help to increase capacity for trainers and youth workers beyond the…*

(Interview: voluntary sector)

> *"we must have someway of recognising learning" this is the way forward trying to this with our new adult leaders qualification in Guiding—trying to tie it in with an OCN level 3…"*

(Interview: voluntary sector)

> *"…there would be benefits for both Y.P and adults volunteers as they would have recognition of what done …from personal experience of […] its has been very valuable to full time work although this not recognised by employers . Previously no incentive for Adults to do this training as no 0offcial recognition outside […].…Importance of outside recognition*

training of those who have been involved in […] over a long period of time…"

(Interview: voluntary sector)

2) **Empowerment**

A credit based framework was seen to possible have an empowering role if utilised in specific ways:

"HE is not for everybody a credit framework could help people to see the value of learning at a particular level and thus make appropriate choices about their own careers and what is suitable for them, could be an empowering framework from that perspective…A framework could help us and learners to understand better where their skills lie could help to develop a self assessment and asses appropriateness of learner for HE or other routes.

(Interview: Higher Education Provider)

3) **Provide a better service to Young People 14–19 if can recognise their wider learning / Important for young people to know the worth of their training and its equivalence :**

"…only in the business for Young people any outcomes for Young. People is positive. If credit can unlock this then all the better."

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

"…It is important to young people as they value it as many of them won't get GCSEs it maybe the only thing they have got…"

(Interview: maintained sector)

"… we are in contact with a large number of young people there is an assumption that because we are only with them a short period that we can't give value to that experience, accreditation would help to recognise this and add value to it".

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

"More people asking what they will get out from a course they expect something…"
It is something that is becoming more important to our members, so raising the issue of it being important that this learning should be recognised:" would need a lot of support to be able to recognise this learning.

(Interview:, Voluntary Sector)

If credit allows transferability and selection of appropriate pathways for young people then it is important for the. However, need a national framework to pull it all together to recognise it as a whole. Is there a new umbrella that under level 1 & 2 a passport to bank it all? not something that's to erroneous and that can be sold to young people, important that it meets their needs and have a choice in it and get a recognised accreditation and some form of transferability between schools has to be of equal status.

(Interview: Maintained Sector)

Everything we run is accredited – e.g. OCN we already do it especially for young people who have to

do it—e.g. young offenders have to engage in some training it is just recognised and given accreditation by us. It is very important for young people to understand what their learning is worth and it is also important for them to know the equivalence…

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

4) Comparability /transferability with formal qualifications

The potential of the recognition of learning through utilising a credit based system was seen to be the contribution it could make to allowing comparability and transferability between informal / non-formal and formal learning experiences:

One of the issues is the business of getting credit for what the voluntary organisations are doing and if we could get recognition of non-formal learning it would make a huge difference. It would make a huge difference to young people to get credit for what doing and it would help the schools and their curriculum if could link up with voluntary organisations as they could help with this—If schools would realise that Voluntary organisations have a high standard: "voluntary organisations have more expectations of young people". .

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

Providing there is clarity recognised at an appropriate level and scaling. It would be important to look at transferability of Awards

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

5) **Flexibility to meet a wide range of needs including those with additional needs.**

For those working with adults and young people with disabilities CQFW could offer more flexible options for recognition of learning and an opportunity to deliver more training that meets the needs of particular groups:

> *Deaf community is small but it is difficult sometimes to carry out any training formally as there are difficulties in joining formal learning non deaf groups but sometimes we do. Better for us are things with no time limits—things we can dip into e.g. YMCA we have worked flexible with and we need to move this to more sustainable levels. It would be good for Young people's activities to be recognised , e.g. like D of E but with no time limits on it so that young people could come back to things ect as deaf young people need more time and support and more flexible attitudes, can a credit framework offer this?*

(Interview Voluntary Organisation)

The flexibility of the credit framework was seen as a strength—it was suggested that formal structures do not meet Young People's needs:

> *The benefits of a Credit Framework is the flexibility of it as formal structures do not meet the needs of young people — benefits for young people are do they meet their needs? On the Practical level credit worthiness and issue but also that it should not be too bureaucratic how is it all to be managed? CQFW*

offers flexibility for learners to achieve in their own time."

(Group Interview: PYO Group)

3.4 Recognition of Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (informal non-formal learning)—challenges:

While most who participated in the research appreciated the positive aspects of adopting a credit framework to recognise learning as evidenced in section 3.3 a number of challenges to embedding / utilising such an approach were highlighted figure 3.4. summarises these challenges,—which are then illustrated with examples of data collected from participants.

Figure 3.4. Summary Empirical Evidence: Recognition of informal non-formal learning—challenges

	EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE SOURCE			
Challenges	**Individual Interviews**	**Group Interviews**	**Research Seminar**	**Docume**
1) Resources /capacity:	All Voluntary and Maintained Sector. Estyn Education and Training Standards HEI's	Principle Youth Officers Group CWVYS	Issues Highlighted	
2) Management / Understanding of the process:				
3) Parity of esteem with formal qualifications				
4) Quality of experience for Young People and Adults/ learners :				
5) Retainment of principles and values of the Youth Service:	All Voluntary and Maintained Sector. Education and Training Standards			
6) Equality	Voluntary sector n=2	CWVYS		
7) Marketing and wider understanding	All Voluntary and Maintained Sector. Estyn Education and Training Standards	Principle Youth Officers Group CWVYS		

1) **Resources /capacity*:*** The voluntary sector were particularly concerned about the cost of utilising credit and the human resources and expertise required. Equally the maintained sector highlighted the challenge of the bureaucracy and quality assurance aspect as it was felt it may get in the way of their work with young people with less face to face youth work and more paper work:

> *"…cost of putting credit together and what support is there; who pays especially for young people; we have a huge volume / large numbers of young people. Really supportive of credit based qualifications for young people however how can this be translated into the coherent route. Would have to re-evaluate the staff roles would their role change from youth worker—to youth educator?... "*

(Interview: Voluntary sector)

Issues identified in the Research seminar:

i) *What is the cost to the voluntary sector? – can the voluntary sector support these extra costs?*

ii) *Do we have the Capacity and is there a need for external help to map the qualifications*

iii) *Lot of work and lot of costs – and lot of time – not an overnight solution*

(Research Seminar).

2) **Management of the process:** The management of the administration and quality assurance systems was raised and the need to see what the administration is going to look like. This was also highlighted by the Education Standards Committee :

"there is a quality assurance and regulatory issue here how would the bureaucracy of it all be managed and by whom so that it is not an add on to but an added value…"who will oversee and maintain standards"?

(Interview: ETS)

"Mechanism of who is going to measure it"?

(Interview: Maintained sector)

"Admin of it all, how would we do it, and who would do it, what is the prize for this? Already do a lot of CPD training this needs mapping of CPD what does this mean to other employers: e,.g First Aid certificates how does one equate to the other and Child protection also there is the issue of quality of these courses currently not monitored"

(Interview: Maintained sector)

"We have a mixed bag of learning opportunities for young people how can all this be brought together? A need to see what the admin is going to look like: forms , methods, process management common currency : there are many areas 22 systems (LEAS) needs to be equity between them. Where are we now and where do we need to go? Consistency and quality standards money is also an issue who is going to pay for the accreditation?.

*(*Group Interview: PYO)

" …there is an *Issue of QA whose role would this be? could ETS be responsible? Estyn should be utilised where these is funding from ACL.*

How can all this be managed QA---training currently not good enough.
For young people taking a formative view /dysfunctional view of young people it would help get into place building blocks so can grow but needs thinking through Use of MIS for YSS and ACL MIS about attainment achievement and distance travelled. Ensuring wider corporate intelligence agencies are utilised. Could use this to help target young people for strategic planning

(Interview : Estyn)

"Some organisations have HO? in England and set their own training agendas so have to map across to a UK level ensuring that those have a lot of influence outside of Wales—need discussions with them."

"Need to understand what is happening else where. And where to do all the organisations fit together e.g OCN, CWVYS-so have to proceed carefully want to avoid competition "as yet do not know what bridges we need to cross—it is a learning situation for us and we have to e clear about what we want". LLUK and interface with WAG and what we do is important–we need to be clear about roles and skills and we are part of a larger picture and larger body of organisations in Wales and England.

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

For one training officer in the maintained sector however, she felt that if it was somebody's designated job that the whole quality assurance and bureaucracy was possible to manage and they felt in particular that having worked with OCN had helped her address these problems:

> *"The process is not as difficult as it first seems–it is important that QA is there to ensure value–people can make to much of it not as difficult I think it helps to have a QA process".*

(Interview: Maintained Sector)

3) **Parity of esteem with formal qualifications:** most training officers from the voluntary sector, the Principle Youth Officers group and training officers from the maintained sector interviewed all raised the issue of the "Value" of credits and other awards, awarded to informal and non-formal learning and strongly perceived that there was not a parity of esteem between formal qualifications.

The Research Seminar identified the issue of parity of esteem with Schools:

> *"Schools need to appreciate the skills gained by young people outside of school i.e. outside the school setting. Put in inspection framework need to record it"*

(Research Seminar)

This position is echoed by the Principle Youth Officers Group, CWVYS, and Training officers in the Voluntary and Statutory sector:

Concern was expressed about lack of reference to non-formal learning in Assembly secondary school measures and would like ensure that non-standard achievement is recognised; "Schools not interested unless its on the RE2": "The status of credit for young people—if awarded credit is it recognised on the School Qualifications level e.g what about RE2?

An example from one local authority was given where they have developed a way to recognise non-formal qualifications with in the 14–19 project— they are all valued routes but they are not recognised on the RE2 .

"The currency thing is critical if non formal not recognised as formal qualifications are".

(Group Interview: Principle Youth Officers Group)

Barriers for recognition of learning are–engaging all projects organisations e.g schools; Educating the education department getting them to recognise what goes on outside of school huge potential with 14–19 recognising and valuing what young people do outside of school.

Need to educate formal educators about the credibility of other awards e.g. Princes Trust Training based on Young Peoples needs, important to recognise the value of this to young people—how do we give it the status.

(Interview: Maintained).

Broader recognition of OCN and what its equivalence is to GCSE's. important issue of mutual recognition and transferability of OCNs and GCSE's—I feel the brand of OCNs are a barrier. Some organisations do not want accreditation e.g I work with some organisations on Child

protection and they don't want this accredited. Gaining recognition for learning is not an issue as most training has some recognition attached to it—it depends what people want from training. It's the wider acknowledgment of that accreditation

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

Prejudice lot of people only recognise academic qualifications and issues of transferability of qualifications if young people not academic they right them off—skills they learn in other ways like in [….] should also be given as much recognition. Adult training also takes place: currently piloting OCN level 3 leader training there are other qualifications that do not have OCN recognition, (Interview Voluntary Sector)

Issue of equivalence or are we looking at value and equivalence? Does it give access to progression and is there added value to the recognition of learning? National Youth Agency framework allows you to see the equivalence Qualifications. Have to be clear about what these equate too and that people understand … the wider community and employers need see their value and understand it too. Value of qualifications need to be valued at all levels.

(Interview HEI, Training provider)

Employers and schools do not understand credit, schools do not take it seriously because the non-formal stuff is not recognised on list 96…with the 14–19 agenda it is becoming more recognised but until it is made statutory then….

(Interview: maintained sector).

The issue of equivalence and the National Youth Agency booklet that maps equivalence between non-formal learning opportunities

for young people and recognised formal qualifications was raised in both the research seminar and interviews:

> *National Youth Agency have a mapping of non-formal qualifications available…Must be possible to do this in Wales?*

(Interview Voluntary Sector).

Scotland has gone one step further through credit rating its Scottish Youth Achievement Awards:

Youth Scotland Awards have been credit rated:

- *The Youth Achievement Bronze Award is at SCQF Level 4 [CQFW level 1) with 7 SCQF credit points;*
- *The Youth Achievement Silver Award is at SCQF Level 5 [CQFW level 2] with 11 SCQF credit points;*
- *The Youth Achievement Gold Award is at SCQF Level 6 [CQFW level 3] with 14 SCQF credit points;*
- *The Youth Achievement Platinum Award is at SCQF Level 7 [CQFW level 4] with 16 SCQF credit points*

(Scottish Qualifications Framework, 2008).

4) **Quality of experience for young people and adults/ learners**: The quality of the learning experience of young people and adults was noted by ETS, Estyn and training officers as being important and they questioned whether there was a danger of having a tick box system that did not meet the needs of young people or adults.

> *"There is a danger of utilising credit as a tick box exercise and therefore people gaining credits at much lower levels than they are capable of"*

(Interview ETS, also raised as in issue in the research seminar).

Trap is looking only at badging something does it make difference to the end user?

(Interview: Estyn)

"…there is always value in measuring how successful we are but it should not be a driver or detrimental to the experience of the young person". There is too much of a drive from WAG for young people to take up a Qualification—a lot of young people who come to us because they have been disengaged from formal education they lack confidence in themselves and the systems. My concern is that there is not a standard for training for young people outside the formal system I worry that young people in the informal system experience many different providers that have varying degrees of quality "better systems for young people outside of school…they often moved around and pushed around many different providers.

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

It was felt that there was a danger of raising young people's experiences and therefore diminishing the value and quality of programmes for young people:

Is there an issue of raising expectations of young people this is in relation to value of credit: e.g Children's University as it lacks an academic element—young people will need to demonstrate some quality in their work…they ask me will this get me job? Will it–I am not convinced!

(Interview Maintained Youth Service)

"…the learning experience is more important than the end result: there is a risk that the Bureaucracy and

cost could detract from the learning experience—outcomes versus learning gained. She also give in a cautionary note " Why are we doing it and Also we should ask ourselves what is the value"? Also Yes a great thing but have to be critical about what we are measuring as this might raise the expectation of young people and adults —fine for encouragement and confidence building but need to be honest with young people not to raise expectations".

(Interview : ETS)

The Importance of QA procedures across the voluntary and maintained sector to ensure quality of experience has been noted throughout section 3 but seen as vital if the "kudos" of both adult and Young people's achievements are recognised.

5) **Retainment of principles and values of the Youth Service:** The Youth Service is under pinned by a set of principles that are articulated in the National Youth Service for Wales and the Curriculum Statement for Wales as highlighted in Section 1 (Context). Research participants highlighted the need to retain these principles:

I would like to see more organisations involved in awarding and recognising huge achievements such as confidence or helping somebody in the community e.g soft skills. Small things should be recognised and feed into a want to learn and that this is celebrated more in award ceremonies. Small informal learning activities for example.

(Interview : Voluntary Sector)

Also the first steps with young people is to build self esteem before can even start to accredit otherwise we are setting them up to fail.

(Interview: Maintained Sector)

What do you want from a youth worker? Support and opportunities or formal qualifications?
What training will effect my practice and give young people a quality experience?
Matching of NOS
Issue of Admin and will YP get value from that accreditation? Has it diluted the their experience and time of face to face youth work? E.g admin and QAA who is going to benefit and who is setting the boundaries?

(Interview: Maintained Sector)

…how do you accredit all young people's experience—also recognising y.p who haven't the self esteem/confidence to engage in programmes---need some recognition of small achviements and recognising young people's interests .

(Interview: Maintained Sector)

I Also question the learning that does happen with some qualifications. You can match anything today e.g pool to numeracy, but often young people just want to come and play pool shouldn't we just let young people play ? Huge role in youth work for creating safe dynamic risk play there has been a shift between learning and play-there is an element the 16-19 who have left school that accreditation is valuable for. I have a fear that accreditation is growing and getting too much we sare becoming a vocational service.

(Interview: Maintained Sector)

This view was echoed by participants in the research seminar:

> *Concern – too much emphasis on accreditation – and miss out on the enjoyment and fun – there is a balance that needs to be achieved. But keep away from a 'regulated and overly accredited Youth Service. Ensure that funding is not overly linked to accreditation.*
>
> *Has to be appropriate to the Young Peoples needs. The Bureaucracy has to be kept to a minimum and not overtake the aims of what trying to achieve with young people*

(Interview: ETS).

> *I see a danger that with accreditation that we are in danger of moving towards a business approach and not valuing the learner's needs, or what is it all worth in the end?*

(Interview HEI)

> Having aspiration is OK – but how to recognise the non-formal and maintain the not compulsory element fundamental the principle of voluntary participation within the Youth Service and as outlined in the National Youth Strategy for Wales.

(Research Seminar)

> *…FE maybe used as a curriculum based subject it needs to retain the voluntary aspect and retain the Awards ethos of voluntary participation.*

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

> *As long as it is voluntary not statutory—comes down to demonstrating success.*

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

Issues of practicalities of it especially as a volunteer organisation, it is also a participatory/democratic and grassroots organisation so members decide for themselves.

(Interviews: Voluntary Youth Service)

… We have a whole range of volunteers with very different backgrounds and academic abilities therefore a choice of whether to engage in recognition of training. …Quality assurance would be an issue as within the […] training structure its incremental it would be difficult to map across to specified because its based on personal need…"

(Interview: Voluntary sector).

What is important the adult learner or the end leaner? who is it for? Is it the end user can it demonstrate that it makes a difference to the young person? Difficult to measure the end impact and value?

(Interview Estyn)

People's perspectives: Personal and organisational perspectives were also noted as challenges to the adoption of a Credit Framework:

Resistance to take part in accredited training we tried once before and had the problem of people completing portfolios—we are trying out different methods as a result e.g. work books, currently using a pilot in Leader ship qualifications)

(Interview: Voluntary Sector).

What impact might it have on volunteers as they have a philanthropic approach to community? Current Capacity to deliver activities and training experiences and recognise learning opportunities? What is a learning opportunity? Without diminishing value.

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

I find it quite hard to get young people into accredited courses—there is a tension for me and I am torn between the informal aspect of our work and the issue of accrediting what young people do makes it formal—for example there is a fine balance between the partnerships we have e.g schools you have to sell to them that they have accreditation but your agenda will be different---should we be accrediting emotional intelligence?

(Interview, Maintained Sector)

Barriers are also staf : some historical issues and the beliefs its about pool ect.

(Interview: Maintained Sector)

Barriers: The big challenge is the bureaucracy and QAA aspect may get in the way of your work with young people with less face to face youth work and more paper work. Also Attitude of some staff to the introduction of more formal way of recognising learning".

"some people scared of qualifications, also time as an all volunteer organisation and also cost…"

(Interviews: Voluntary Youth Service

"OCN is recognising new programmes all the time—However not all Youth sector organisations have their learning accredited a little bit of resistance by some…"

(Interview: Voluntary sector)

6) Equality and Diversity

It was noted by two research participants in particular that we need to take on board equal access to training and accreditation so as to meet individual learning needs:

Would benefit more from the informal structures than the formal ones structures for learning. But we have the problem that deaf young people don't engage with a deaf community—we want to develop a positive image.–"its important for young deaf people. There is access to Deaf tutors through DAW but it should be more widely available-I would also like other organise to recognise our skills that we can can offer–the barrier is often from other organisations not using us appropriately—sometimes a double barrier—same thing iswith direct access to to OCN,it has taken a year to speak to the right person. Since the WAY gone all the expertise it has also gone-it has been difficult for the DAW to operate "the closing of the WAY has a big impact on us. Also there is an issue of funding deaf young people feel they need specialist input and in another research project the young people asked the research where was the funding for my post?

(Interview : Voluntary Sector))

For more Y.P to have the opportunity to achieve it is restricted at present e.g the achievement of Youth Achievement awards and D of E don't target these

groups "deaf Young people" they need to find ways to work with them and overcome those barriers. People running the organisations need to have better understanding of how they can work together. If we could think along the line of Welsh Language usage as a similar issue.

(Interview: Voluntary Sector):

We need to make sure all this credit stuff is utilised as so valuable to BME and DA Somali communities credit really valuable Mencap, would be valuable to these groups to acknowledge credit a system that can be applied to all young people…There is the NOS and is this going to have any impact on this? And coherent routes to youth work training.

(Interview: Voluntary Sector)

Diversity was also identified in the research seminar:

- *All organisations work in a specific way because it works and members are loyal to their organisations*
- *Need to ensure that voluntary youth officers stay diverse and no need to overly standardise the way we operate*

(Research seminar)

7) **Marketing and wider understanding:** Issues of marketing and public understanding were also raised as important by those who participated in the research:

Issue: How many employers understand what an ASDAN D of E means? Importance of Employers understanding of accreditation and value of whats being accredited.

(Interview: Maintained Sector)

There needs to be an awareness raising amongst employers do they understand what credit is… if we don't do this we do a disservice to young people.

(Interview: Maintained sector).

Has to benefit the wider community i.e does the general pubic understand what it all means this is how the value of it will be recognised. There are issues of marketing and public understanding the What is the value of it ? Do young people value it does the wider public, industry employers. "If such a good thing everyone will want it and understand it it and it will seem relevant and valued.

(Interview ETS)

The results of the empirical research outlined in this section have fully informed the key findings, recommendations and areas for further research found in section 4.

4. Key Findings, Recommendations and Areas for Future Research.

The aim of the research was to: understand the issues of the recognition of informal and non-formal learning for both young people and the adult workforce within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service. Section 3 outlines the data collected and issues raised. This section summarises the key findings, recommendations and areas for future research that would appear pertinent from the empirical data collected.

4.1 Key Findings

4.1.1 Recognition and Accreditation Issues in the Youth Service

It is evident that there are training opportunities available for the adult workforce both within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service. Gaps for both the maintained and voluntary Sector however have been highlighted:

i. Maintained sector: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is seen to be an area for further attention within the maintained sector with a need for this training to be recognised and to be included within the structures of a coherent route to training.

ii. Voluntary sector: A high level of unqualified, and a high level of in house trained workers, had not undertaken training subjected to professional endorsement by the Education and Training Standards Committee or which was included on the National Qualifications Framework.

There are a number of opportunities available for young people to have their informal/non-formal learning recognised within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service—there is an opportunity for further recognition of their experiences within a single structure such as CQFW. It was felt by research participants that there was a need to value what opportunities already exist rather than invent new qualifications / awards.

Quality of training and accreditation for the adult workforce has been raised by Estyn—however, it is recognised by both Estyn and a recent LLUK report (2008) on workforce development that issues of recruitment and retention and that the "… high numbers of part time staff within the maintained sector brings about challenges in relation to work force training and development" (LLUK, 2008:p37).

4.1.2 Knowledge and Understanding of CQFW

Knowledge and understanding of CQFW was generally high within the sample. The majority of those who participated within the research however had previous knowledge through the work of a Senior CQFW officer and the majority were working at a senior strategic level and therefore engaged in the debates about recognition of informal and non-formal learning. Training officers were also familiar with credit as the result of working with OCN

Wales modules and courses. However, understanding of the process and mechanisms of implementing CQFW and awarding credit was limited; the need for further support in this area was highlighted.

4.1.3. Potential Impacts of CQFW on the Youth Service

The impacts of adopting a credit based framework on both individual voluntary organisations and the maintained Youth Service were generally seen as positive with some caveats (for challenges see section 3.4). The positive impacts were seen to be:

1) Added value to adult training within the voluntary sector.

2) Could offer an empowering model to adults and young people if utilised as a self assessment tool to see where strengths and areas for further development lie.

3) Provide a better service to young people 14–19 if can recognise their wider learning.

4) Comparability /transferability with formal qualifications.

5) Flexibility to meet a wide range of needs including those with additional needs.

4.1.4 Recognition of Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (informal non-formal learning)—challenges:

While most who participated in the research appreciated the positive aspects of adopting a credit framework to recognise learning, a number of challenges to embedding / utilising such an approach were highlighted. These included the following:

1) **Resources /capacity*:*** The voluntary sector were particularly concerned about the cost of utilising credit and the human resources and expertise required. Equally the maintained sector highlighted the challenge of the bureaucracy and quality assurance aspect as it was felt it may get in the way of their work with young people with less face to face youth work and more paper work.

2) **Management / Understanding of the process:** the management of the administration and quality assurance systems was raised and the need to see what the administration is going to look like: forms, methods, process management, common currency : the example was given that there are 22 systems (LEAS) and there would need to be equity between them. This was also highlighted by ETS: “there is a quality assurance and regulatory issue here how would the Bureaucracy of it all be managed and by whom so that it is not an add on to but an added value”.

3) **Parity of esteem with formal qualifications*:*** most training officers from the voluntary sector, the Principle Youth Officers group and training officers from the maintained sector interviewed all raised the issue of the “Value” of credits and other awards awarded to informal and non-formal learning and strongly perceived that there was not a parity of esteem between formal qualifications. Perspectives from both CWVYS and Principle Youth Officers Group were that they had a lot to offer the 14-19 developments and this was not being fully recognised or utilised.

The National Youth Agencies National Framework of Awards in Non-formal Educational settings”, which maps equivalence between non-formal learning opportunities for

young people and recognised formal qualifications was also raised by research participants as an area they would like to see developed. Scotland's model of credit rating Scottish Youth Achievement Awards also appears to be a useful model to explore further.

4) **Quality of experience for Young People and Adults:** The quality of the learning experience of young people and adults was noted by ETS, Estyn and training officers as being important and they questioned whether there was a danger of having a tick box system that did not meet the needs of young people or adults. The issue of raising expectations was also noted both for young people and adults.

5) **Retainment of principles and values of the Youth Service:** The Youth Service is underpinned by a set of principles that are articulated in the National Youth Service for Wales and the Curriculum statement for Wales as highlighted in Sections 1 (Context) and 3 (Findings) ; Training officers from both the voluntary and maintained sector highlighted the importance of retaining these values e.g voluntary participation and young people's needs and choices being taken into consideration. They along with ETS and Estyn also wanted to ensure there was value to young people engaging in accredited learning, and that it was not just an outcome / target led approach, but that the learning process was central. The dangers of the dilution of the Youth Service's aims are noted by training officers and the literature discussed in section 1 (Context).

6) **Marketing and wider understanding:** Issues of marketing and public understanding were also raised as important by

those who participated in the research: What is the value of credit? Do young people value it? Does the wider public, industry, employers? *"If such a good thing everyone will want it and understand it and it will seem relevant and valued".*

4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been highlighted:

1) In line with workforce development recommendations: “The training offered by the voluntary sector and the transferable skills it develops need to be mapped against the Coherent Route and also National Occupational Standards”—***A credit framework would assist this process through allowing cross referencing between training to be more transparent*.** Equally the role of the Educational Training Standards Committee as an Endorsement Body would need to be reviewed to ensure quality assurance and regulation.

2) Address the need for recognition of CPD and past experience so it can feed into the coherent route for training—again ***CQFW could play an important role in achieving this.***

3) Ensure that there is recognition of training, accreditation opportunities and awards that are already available within both the maintained and voluntary Youth Service and how these can be utilised further to help both the adult work force and Young people. For young people it was suggested that there is no need to develop new awards but instead recognise the awards they are already engaging with. For the adult workforce a need to address issues of credit transfer and professional Youth Work qualifications: such as opportunities for bridging modules between qualifications, e.g. teaching degrees / social work degrees and Youth Work JNC professional Qualifications.

4) It would appear important to address the quality of training and accreditation opportunities, there is thus a need to explore how this can be managed effectively within the Youth Service for young people and the adult workforce.

5) It is evident within the research sample that knowledge of CQFW is apparent and in some cases well understood by those in strategic positions (such as the Principle Youth Officers Group; Training Officers Committee CWVYS). However, there is still a need to ensure that clear messages about the role, process and mechanisms of implementing CQFW are made available and the processes people need to engage in to take forward the recognition of informal and non-formal learning are fully understood.

6) Feasibility studies for both the maintained and voluntary sector need to be undertaken. Feasibility studies would help to address the challenges highlighted in the research and how the positive impacts identified can be realised. This would allow CQFW's key actions to be taken forward.

7) There would appear to be a need for CQFW to look at how it can support the Youth Service and other sectors in achieving parity of esteem between informal and non-formal accreditation. CQFW, has a vital role to play in the management / overseeing and implementation of robust quality assured systems. This role is recognised by CQFW as evident from their handbook (CQFW 2006, 4: p10) which states:

> To develop Credit Common Accord and Quality Assurance process for non-formal Learning e.g Adult and Continuing Learning, In house Company Training and

voluntary and community provision. (CQFW, 2006, 4:p.10)

How can this be implemented within the maintained and voluntary Youth Service? Offering parity in the recognition of achievement for learners of all ages, whether they are learning in the workplace, community, at school, college or university (CQFW, 2006, 1:p.3) is an aim of CQFW.

8) A further recommendation would be to produce a Welsh version of the National Youth Agencies "National Framework of Awards in Non-formal Educational settings" and explore how youth awards can be credited rated utilising Scotland's model of credit rating Scottish Youth Achievement Awards.

9) There is also a need to explore how organisations / key stakeholders involved in, or which have influence on the Youth Service can work more closely together to ensure a more coherent route to training/ workforce development which includes CQFW.

10) Ensure that the principles underpinning the Youth service are fully understood and taken on board.

4.3 Areas for future Research

1) Feasibility studies for both the maintained and voluntary Youth Services to explore all challenges identified in section 3.4. and how the process can be managed.

2) ***A broader analysis of the role of CQFW in managing and providing resources for the QALL: informal / non-formal learning sector to enable the challenges identified in section 3.4 to be addressed;*** specifically in relation to quality assurance processes and management of systems to ensure that the recognition of informal and non-formal learning is robust–hence developing strategies to ensure that recognition of this learning has parity of esteem with formal learning.

3) ***A review of the National Youth Agencies "National Framework of Awards in Non-formal Educational settings" and Scotland's credit rating of youth awards*** so as to bring it in line with CQFW and a Welsh Educational context.

4) ***Explore how ETS and CQFW can work together.***

5) ***Engagement of Young People's perspectives'***: the research concentrated on training managers and those engaged in strategic positions within the Youth Service. Young People's perspectives therefore have not been solicited and any future research could and should take onboard their views on their needs.

6) ***Engagement of the wider workforce both paid and voluntary within the Youth Service to ascertain training needs:*** Again the research concentrated on training managers and those engaged in strategic positions within the Youth Service, the wider workforce needs to be consulted in relation to their needs; this could be, and should be, part of any future feasibility studies.

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Individual Interview Schedules

- **Aim:**
  - An Exploration of the Learning and Accreditation needs for maintained and voluntary Youth Service provision.

- **Objectives:**
  - Identify the issues faced by the voluntary and maintained sector in relation to learning and accreditation.
  - Understand the issues of recognising non-formal and informal learning through training and other experiences for both young people and the Adult workforce.

1. **Could you tell me about your understanding of what a credit based system is and what it offers to learners?**

2. **Could you tell me if you feel that a credit based system**

would be useful in recognising non-formal and informal learning for both Young People and the Adult workforce within your organisation.

3. What impact do you think a credit based system could have on your organisation, if any? E,g what might be the benefits and the barriers?

4. In relation to the recognition of learning within this sector what are the main issues for you and your organisation.

5. Are there any other issues you would like to comment on in relation the issues of:

- Identify the issues faced by the voluntary and maintained sector in relation to learning and accreditation.
- Understand the issues of recognising non-formal and informal learning through training and other experiences for both Young People and the Adult workforce.