

**Ymateb gan: Cyngor Cymreig y Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid Gwirfoddol
Response from: Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS)**

The Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS) is the national, independent representative body for the voluntary youth work sector in Wales with a current membership of 92 organisations that work with over 250,000 young people between the ages of 11–25 years. It is estimated that 30,000 volunteers and 3,000 paid staff are engaged in delivering work with young people within the voluntary youth work sector.

Current membership reflects the huge diversity and rich variety of voluntary youth work and youth support services and includes both national and local/community based organisations.

CWVYS seeks to work in close co-operation with partners from across the voluntary and maintained youth work sectors, believing that such joint working creates better results and serves the wider sector well.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation and in doing so, seeks to fully represent the views of its member organisations.

INTRODUCTION

CWVYS subscribes to the view presented in the *Youth Work National Occupational Standards*; namely, that youth work ‘*assists young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential*’.

CWVYS also espouses the routes to specialist support for young people as outlined in *Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes*: and as outlined in the ‘Five Pillars of Youth Work’.

In addition, it is important to highlight that ‘*Youth work in Wales is based primarily on a voluntary relationship between young people and youth workers. The Youth Service is a universal entitlement, open to all young people within the specified age range of 11-25*’

The voluntary youth work sector continues to be able and willing to deliver open access (or universal) and targeted youth work – either within collaborative partnership frameworks and/or within individual organisations, where both open access and targeted delivery co-exist ‘under the same roof’, for the benefits of all young people.

1. In non-formal and informal environments, where youth work flourishes and enriches the lives of young people and where opportunities exist to discuss issues with a youth worker, young people are able to highlight the issues they face and how they want to help to shape and influence the direction of the new Curriculum for Wales.
2. The interactions between youth workers and young people occur largely through contact established via open access provision. Based on the critically important voluntary relationship between young people and youth workers, this non-judgemental and supportive approach enables young people to engage and to highlight issues that are relative to and relevant about the proposed new Curriculum for Wales.
3. Youth work is a key part of education provision for young people in Wales. There is a lack of dialogue between formal education providers and the youth work sector and this needs to be improved on all sides in order to ensure a more informed way forward in terms of professional understanding but also to support future, constructive and co-designed approaches to delivering the best possible education outcomes for young people.
4. The report *Education in Wales – our national mission 2017-2021* highlights youth work as having a role to play within this educational context (pg31). However, the sector's input and potential value here is seemingly reduced to '*implement the Wales Charter for Youth Work and establish an independently chaired National Youth Support Services Board to secure a shared vision for effective youth work*'. The recent forming of an Interim Youth Work Board is a much-welcomed development and it needs to 'find its feet' in this, its early days since being formed. We would, however, suggest that several, positive benefits and outcomes – for the development of the new Curriculum, for young people and the wider education sector - could arise from there being a stronger and more strategic link between those engaged in developing the new Curriculum and the Interim Youth Work Board.
5. It is important to say that CWVYS is very pleased to be part of both the Education Reform Reform Strategic Stakeholder Group (SSG) and its Children and Young People sub-group. This affords us good opportunities to engage directly with officials and other stakeholder partners and to highlight the beneficial impact of youth work practice within, and with, formal education approaches. The youth work sector as a whole is willing and able to engage readily with these strategic processes and can/does/will provide examples of good practice and provision which enhance the proposed Curriculum. Youth work's contribution to preventative and early intervention is clear but it also enhances the educative offer for, to and with young people in relation to topics which include expressive arts, emotional well being and mental health, personal and social development along with a culture of learning within young people-friendly and led environments.
6. That said, CWVYS believes that the SSG would benefit from adopting a more strategic approach in terms of linking with the third sector more generally and with the voluntary youth work sector more specifically. An example here might be the strategic interest in financial literacy education amongst young people. However, this is already taking place within the voluntary youth work sector - and so opportunities to learn and develop better understanding of how this operates have been missed.

7. It is disappointing to note how youth work has been 'sidelined' with regards to the original 'co-design' and 'co-construction' work for the new Curriculum. Examples here would be the development of two pieces of work in particular: the Areas of Learning and Experience working groups and the development of the *What Matters?* documents. We would (and do) argue that meaningful and inclusive co-design and co-construction approaches involving all parts of the wider education sector would yield far better and more informed outcomes. Having to play 'catch up' in these contexts is not preferable and does not afford the youth work sector the respect it deserves.
8. The youth work sector and third sector in general would welcome the opportunity to engage with Regional Consortia in a much more productive manner. The general perception of Consortia working solely on formal education issues is perhaps understood in terms of priorities as being led by Curriculum reform. However, as with the previous point, earlier and more urgent, informed engagement would pay dividends in enhanced good practice, contacts, knowledge base and reduction of duplicated effort. The space for discussion needs to be in place and Regional Consortia are a vehicle for those discussion and shared learning.
9. There are, CWVYS believes, hugely positive steps being developed in direct relation to young people and to youth work in Wales. Our involvement in the Inquiry into Youth Work (CYPE Committee, 2016 - ongoing); the important forming of the Interim Youth Work Board; the Board's stated aim to engage with young people as its first priority; the registration of youth workers and youth support workers and the key working relationship with the Education Workforce Council; a focus on improving the marketing and communications aspect of the sectors' work; recognition of the role youth work plays across many areas of life e.g. mental health; youth homelessness; the establishing of a Welsh Youth Parliament along with other issues provides for significant and extremely well-connected opportunities within which the new Curriculum would benefit - and where young peoples' experience of that new Curriculum would be enhanced tremendously.

Paul Glaze
Chief Executive
December 2018

Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services
Cyngor Cymreig y Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid Gwirfoddol
Baltic House/ *Tŷ Baltic*
Mount Stuart Square/ *Sgwâr Mount Stuart*
Cardiff/ *Caerdydd*
CF10 5FH
Registered Charity Number/ Rhif Elusen Gofrestredig: 1110702
Company Number/ Rhif y Cwmni : 5444248

Tel/*Ffôn*: 029 2047 3498
Email/*Ebost*: paul@cwvys.org.uk
Web; www.cwvys.org.uk
@CWVYS
www.facebook.com/CWVYS