

Youth Work Methodology Handbook

Equalities



Equality isn't about treating everybody the same. It's about treating everybody fairly.

Overview/Aims (*what we are hoping to achieve*)

This handbook has been developed to introduce, explain or expand on existing knowledge and experience in relation to ensuring equality in the provision of youth services.

In seeking to meet the outcomes for young people focussed upon in the Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales and the National Youth Service Strategy for Wales, this document encourages consideration of how best to ensure all young people in Wales have equal opportunities to engage in youth services and are treated fairly when they do so. The handbook will also provide youth workers with tools and ideas to raise young people's awareness of equality issues. These aims should focus on celebrating equality and diversity.

The Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales states: "*Youth work is driven by the voluntary principle which recognises that young people have the right to choose whether to engage with youth work provision*". Thus, this handbook provides ideas and guidance on creating the best possible circumstances for young people to engage in youth work. The Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales also states: "*Youth Work through its practice should promote opportunities and access for all young people whatever their race, gender, sexual identity, language, religion, disability, age, background or personal circumstances*".

In developing this handbook, experienced partners have explored this subject on several levels, resulting in some practical support and ideas to help practitioners ensure equality of opportunity and fairness in the delivery of services, whilst raising young people's awareness of the issues.

The ideas and opinions expressed within this handbook are not intended to be a prescriptive way of ensuring equalities in youth work provision, although the Equality Act 2010 does place certain duties on this provision. The handbook offers suggested methods and approaches. Good youth work practice expects practitioners to adapt any model or ideology to best meet the needs of the beneficiaries and where possible, to share with others new methodologies and practical ideas to more widely benefit young people.

This document is part of a library of Good Practice Methodology Handbooks for Youth Work in Wales. You are encouraged to delve into the other handbooks to find a plethora of practical resources and good practice theory to enhance your youth work practice and deliver the best possible outcomes for young people in Wales.

We wish you well as you seek to provide increased and better opportunities for young people to develop.

Objectives (*how we are hoping to achieve the aims*)

- Through a clear, concise document that is practical and relevant to new and experienced statutory and voluntary youth workers.

- Through a document that signposts further reading and specialist organisations

Acknowledgements

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A plan to help you navigate your way around the handbook

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5. Key equality areas in youth work

Age	Disability	Sex and Gender	Sexual Orientation	Race	Religion and belief	Economic Inequality	Welsh
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Which issues are associated with the above 'characteristics'?

Some things you may or may not have known

Who is doing good work in these equality areas? Examples of good practice and practical solutions

Links to organisations specialising in equalities

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1. Introduction

This handbook is aimed at anyone who plans and delivers youth work in Wales. It is relevant to new and experienced youth workers at all levels. The handbook is not intended to make you experts in equalities but provides guidance on ensuring equality issues are considered and implemented in planning, monitoring, and importantly, in delivering services. Larger organisations or bodies delivering youth work may have specialist functions, which include an expertise in equality issues. Smaller organisations may not have a dedicated function on diversity and equality.

We know, from our experience of writing this handbook, that there is no shortage of resources, websites and guidance on equalities. We also know how daunting it can be when faced with a glut of information! We have tried to be selective in signposting further reading and resources rather than supplying endless lists of web addresses. Thus the handbook is not a directory of organisations working in the field of equality and human rights.

We don't want you to get bogged down in definitions and the policy context surrounding equalities in youth work but the following should provide you with the background information you need to understand the main issues covered in this handbook: youth work and equalities.

Key definitions

1. What is Youth Work in Wales? The Youth Work Curriculum Statement states:

“Youth work is delivered by both the statutory and voluntary youth service in Wales through a voluntary relationship between young people and youth workers. Youth workers operate within their own organisations and communities and in partnership with others.

The Youth Service, as a universal entitlement, is open to all young people within the specified age range 11-25. The type, mix and priorities of youth work are determined on a local, national and organisational level. The establishment of appropriate provision should be determined by the needs, wants, interests and aspirations of young people”

Youth work provides or facilitates:

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

Youth work is provided through both the voluntary and statutory sectors. It might, for example, include:

- *centre-based work;*
- *detached, outreach and mobile work;*
- *curriculum specialities like arts and culture, first aid, sport, etc;*
- *information, advice, guidance and counselling services;*
- *project work;*
- *residential work;*
- *targeted provision for specific groups;*

- *one to one work;*
- *partnership working;*
- *mechanisms for involving young people in decision-making processes;*
- *opportunities for volunteering”*

2. What is equality?

Equality revolves around the idea that certain characteristics, be they race, gender, religion, colour, ethnic origin, ability, age, language, or sexual orientation are not differences that justify inferior treatment (Fredman 2001). Being equal relies on the universalism of human rights which means no one should be purposely discriminated against. This is because, individuals have rights which cannot be removed by any political authority, and are the property of the individual subject who possesses them (O’Byrne 2003).

Viewing and treating fellow citizens as equals is key to ensuring democracy. All international and domestic human rights documents include an equality guarantee which ensures that each individual life, in every corner of the world, is bound by a similar set of ethical principles (O’Byrne 2003, Ishay 2004). However, discrimination continues to exist. Preventing discrimination is integral to the success of an integrated and more harmonious society.

The numerous social, cultural, political and economic spheres that equalities touch are wide. Therefore, organisations have different approaches, ideals, and definitions of what being equal means. The following demonstrates the importance of equalities in international and domestic policies.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children under the age of 18 (note that the youth work entitlement is for the 11-25 age group, so you will need to be mindful of this when working with young people over 18). On 16 December 1991, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland formally agreed to make sure that every child in the UK has all the rights as listed in the convention. The Welsh Government has shown its commitment to the convention by adopting it as the basis for policy making for children and young people in Wales. Altogether there are 54 articles in the convention.¹

The ‘Let’s Get it Right’ website provides a wealth of resources that you can use to raise young people’s awareness of the UNCRC <http://www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk/toolkit2.aspx>

European Union

The Charter for Fundamental rights includes a range of personal, civil, political, economic and social rights instilled within EU law. Drawn up by representatives from each country of the EU IN 2000, the charter was eventually given binding legal effect equal in 2009. The charter merges the fundamental rights taken from numerous legislative bodies such as the Council of Europe, the United Nations (UN) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and was devised for making fundamental rights clearer, more visible, and to create legal certainty within the EU.

The Charter stresses that each member of the Union has the right to **dignity** (the right to life and prohibition of torture, inhumane treatment or slavery etc), **freedoms** (the right to security, freedom of expression, freedom of the arts, freedom of thought etc), **equality** (equality before

¹ [http://www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk/documents/UNCRC%20Poster%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk/documents/UNCRC%20Poster%20(English).pdf)

the law, non-discrimination, for cultural, religious, linguistic diversity, equality between men and women, the rights of the child, integration of persons with disabilities etc) and **justice** (the right to an effective remedy and a fair trial, presumption of innocence and the right of defence etc).

The UK Government

The UK Government dedicates significant resources to maintaining and developing equalities in the UK. Both the Government Equalities Office and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) want to ensure an equal landscape throughout the UK, which they believe will empower individuals and communities by promoting greater participation in public and community life. They want to: ²

- Change culture and attitudes; reduce prejudice which holds people back from achieving their potential and tackle discrimination, hatred and violence at home and abroad.
- Emphasise that there is respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and to maintain the protection of each individual's human rights. Also they want to emphasise that People's ability to achieve their potential should not be limited by prejudice or discrimination
- Indicate to everyone that every individual has an equal opportunity to participate in society
- Emphasise there is mutual respect between groups based on understanding and valuing diversity and on shared respect for equality and human rights³

The Equality Strategy for Building a Fairer Britain ⁴ states that:

"Equality is not an add-on, but an integral part of this government's commitment to build a a stronger economy and fairer society. This strategy sets out a new approach to delivering equality: one that moves away from treating people as groups or 'equality strands' and instead recognises that we are a nation of 62 million individuals."

Key to this policy is the introduction of the 2010 Equality Act which was brought in to make to make equality legislation clearer. [The Equality Act 2010](#) provides a legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all; to update, simplify and strengthen the previous legislation; and to deliver a simple, modern and accessible framework of discrimination law, which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The provisions of the Equality Act are being brought into force at different times to allow time for the people and organisations affected by the new laws to prepare for them. Most of the provisions came into force on 1 October 2010.⁵

Find out more about the Equality Act 2010 and how it impacts on your youth work planning and delivery here (link to heading 'The Equality Act 2010 in youth work practice')

² <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/>

³ http://www.equalities.gov.uk/about_geo/ehrc.aspx

⁴ <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/Equality%20Strategy%20tagged%20version.pdf>

⁵ http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx

The Welsh Government (WG)

The Welsh Government's mission statement on equality says that they will take every opportunity to promote equality and inclusive outcomes for all the citizens of Wales. It will seek to make equality an integral part of its policy making in order to actively contribute to an environment that is free from discrimination.⁶ Three key aims:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
2. Advance equality of opportunity for all.
3. Promote good relations

The Welsh Government believes that bridging the gap between numerous inequalities in Welsh society can only have a beneficial effect:

“The Welsh (...) Government needs to ensure it develops and embraces the benefits that a more diverse and integrated population afford us through producing policies and services that meet the identified needs of individuals and communities, placing a citizen focus based on the principles of human rights; fairness, respect, equality and dignity at the centre of all our policy actions.”

Key to this commitment has been the approval of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure and has become a part of Welsh law. It places Wales ahead of the UK in making the UNCRC part of its domestic law.⁷ The Measure will help to strengthen the rights-based approach taken towards the Welsh Government's work with children and young people aged 0-25 inclusive.

The overall aim of the Measure is to ensure children and young people are in a stronger position to access the support and services available to them to achieve better outcomes and improved well-being.

Further reading

We would recommend having a look at [How fair is Wales?](#) This review brings together evidence to answer the question *How fair is Wales?* It offers a new perspective on some persistent inequalities and it identifies some new challenges.

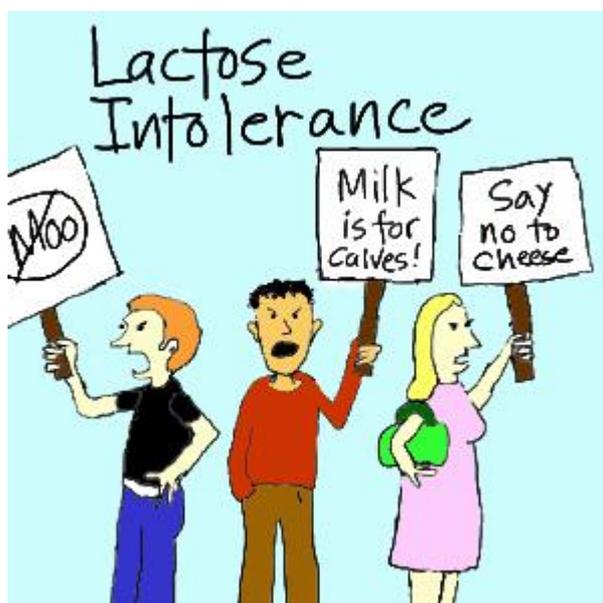
[Dignity Drive](#) is designed to look at what human rights mean in the context of everyday life, how they affect real people and why they are therefore so important.

⁶ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/100607ipmrev2en.pdf>

⁷ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/unconventions/110325childleaflet.pdf>

2. The Equality Act 2010 and youth work practice

“Equality, human rights and inclusion work is underpinned by the law and how we all put the law into practice. It is not ‘political correctness gone mad’”⁸



You might think that looking at equality law is time-consuming but by treating young people accessing your services with fairness, respect and dignity, you are opening up to the widest possible audience¹⁰

The Equality Act 2010 brings together all the legal requirements on equality that the private, public and voluntary sectors need to follow.

It affects equality law in delivering all sorts of services and clubs. A youth worker (in any of the above sectors) will be delivering a service or running a club so the Equality Act applies.

The purpose of the Equality Act is that everyone has the right to be treated fairly when using services. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission has developed a [core guidance](#) for service providers.

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of certain characteristics. There are eight **protected characteristics** of people who use services:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

⁸ <http://www.iedp.org.uk/News/Press-Releases/Institute-of-Equality-and-Diversity-Practitioners.aspx>

⁹ http://farm2.static.flickr.com/1222/561797579_179aaa787b.jpg

¹⁰ http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/starter-kit/module_6_web.pdf

As a youth worker, you have responsibilities under the law if:

- you are a service provider, providing goods, facilities or services to young people (regardless of whether these are paid for)
- you are a private club or association

The law protects against:

Discrimination

- Direct - treating a young person worse than someone else because of a protected characteristic
- Indirect – putting in place a way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one
- Discrimination arising from disability – treating a disabled young person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be justified
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled young people

Harassment

- Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which is hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to someone with a protected characteristic or in a way that is sexual in nature.

Victimisation

- Treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under the Equality Act or supporting somebody who is doing so.

As well as these characteristics, the law also protects people from being discriminated against:

- By someone who wrongly perceives them to have one of the protected characteristics.
- Because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. This includes the parent of a disabled child or adult or someone else who is caring for a disabled person¹¹

The law can vary slightly depending which sector you work in:

- If you are a youth worker employed by a Local Authority, your employers are very likely to have a department dealing with equality and diversity issues. It would be a good idea to speak to someone in that team if you have any concerns about equality issues or if you need support or advice on your responsibilities under the Equality Act

¹¹ http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/module_1_ea_starter_web_final.pdf

2010. You could speak to your Training Manager about equality and diversity training if you think there is a gap in knowledge in your team or service. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has also developed a [guide](#) for listed public authorities in Wales if you would like to find out in more detail about the specific duties in Wales

- If you are a youth worker employed by a voluntary or community sector organisation (including charities and religion or belief organisations), you may or may not have a dedicated person dealing with equality and diversity issues. Speak to your line manager or Human Resources department if you need any support or advice on your responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. You could raise training needs on equalities in your supervision or review meetings. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has also developed a [guide](#) for voluntary and community sector organisations
- If you are a youth worker employed by a private company you may or may not have a dedicated person dealing with equality and diversity issues. Speak to your line manager or Human Resources department if you need any support or advice on your responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. You could raise training needs on equalities in your supervision or review meetings. The Equality and Human Rights Commission provides information for [businesses](#) You may be employed as a youth worker for a Housing Association. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission outlines your duties in the FAQ section [here](#)

Remember – the above information relates to what the law says you have to do. Good practice says that you can and should go further than the duty!

3. Mapping your current service

A good place to start! There's no point us suggesting ways of ensuring equality of opportunity and service, if you already have it all sussed. However, there's always room for improvement. Even if you are following the letter of the law under the Equality Act 2010, you can still look for ways to provide an even more inclusive service to young people. You may be a very small organisation that has limited experience or expertise in equalities. Even if you are working for a bigger organisation, you should make sure you and your team are on top of things.

Either way, here are some questions to help you assess your commitment and ability to provide and deliver a fair service to the young people you work with.

Does your organisation:

- have a policy relating to equality issues? If yes, when was it last updated?
- have in place any systems for monitoring equality policies? How and how often are these systems implemented?
- have in place systems for recording young people's views on how fair and equal your services really are?
- have a process for dealing with complaints in relation to equalities (from young people or their parents, carers, friends)?
- provide equality training for new staff as part of their induction?
- provide ongoing training on equality issues, in particular as a result of any legislative changes?

4. Equalities within the planning process

Let's re-visit and clarify the aims of the handbook. To ensure:

Equality of opportunity

Young people have equal opportunities to engage in youth services
(see Example 1 on how you can use the NAOMIE model to ensure equality of opportunity)

Equality of service

Young people are treated fairly when they access youth services
(see Example 1 on how you can use the NAOMIE model to ensure equality of service)

Equality awareness

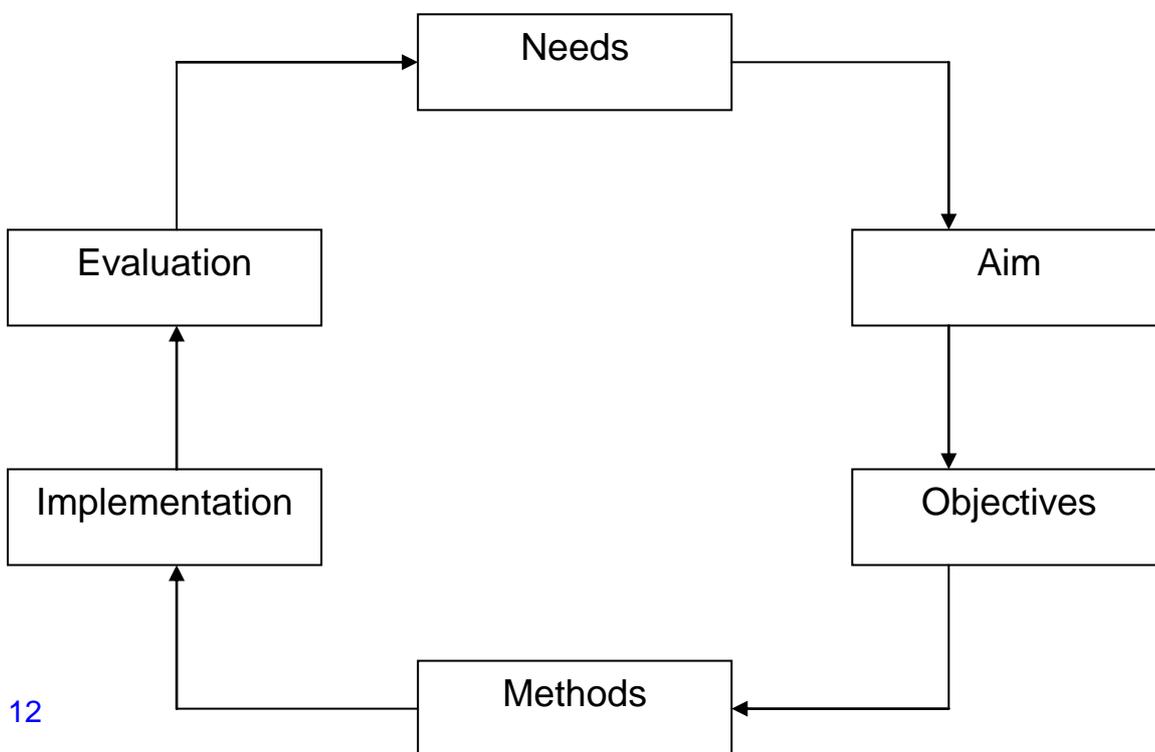
Youth workers have the necessary tools to raise young people's awareness of equality issues
(see Example 2 on how you can use the NAOMIE model to plan an awareness activity on equalities)

Example 1

Incorporating equality of opportunity and equality of service into the NAOMIE model

NAOMIE

The NAOMIE loop training model is just one of a number that may be used when undertaking any form of planned activity. The use of this type of training model should be regarded as an aid to programming and not as a constraint to planning an activity. This method of programme planning may be used for various types of activities: pool matches; inter-club events; residential training or outdoor pursuits.



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¹² From Youth Work Methodology Handbook: Planning and Evaluation (2011)

Needs

Firstly determine the need for the activity - why are you planning this activity?

For example, you may be organising a day out to Porthcawl because you have consulted with young people and they have asked for it.

From an equalities perspective, you will need to be thinking about any possible barriers to delivering the activity, even at this early stage of the planning process. Will all the young people in the target area have an equal opportunity to attend and participate? What alternatives or solutions are there?

Aims

Once you have established the need for an activity and are satisfied it will provide equality of opportunity you can decide what the general aim of that activity will be. An aim is a long term statement of intent. They are imprecise, often ambiguous, give a general direction without time limit and are often written from the point of view of a professional, ie. you as the worker and what you intend to achieve with the activity.

For example, if planning a day out your aim might be: to provide young people with an opportunity to spend the day together at the seaside

Objectives

Whilst your aim illustrates what you, as the youth worker, intend the activity to be, objectives describe what the young people will be able to do, or know, or value if the learning takes place, ie. objectives define a desired change of behaviour - the learning outcomes.

Objectives are precise, unambiguous and time limited. They describe a standard to be achieved, written from the point of view of the young people. Objectives can be used as benchmarks to test the success of an activity - that is, at the end of the activity had the young people achieved what had been intended.

The easy way to write objectives is to start each one: At the end of the session the young people will be able to: produce; identify; state; list. (Use positive, testable words)

Methods

You need to decide what methods you are going to use in order to achieve your objectives. For example, are you going to organise beach games to help with team building, are you going to allow free time for the young people?

You will need to consider how each proposed activity is inclusive and provide alternatives or solutions to any potential inequalities.

Implementation

Once you have chosen the methods you are going to use then you need to decide how you will deliver the activity. This implementation plan will include resources, both human and material, timing, bookings that need to be made, ie. for a minibus, advertising the activity.

Consider which staff will be required. Are the staff trained on equality issues? Will the young people be treated fairly when participating? The Equalities and Human Rights Commission provides information under the heading [‘When you are responsible for what other people do’](#)

How and where will the activity be advertised? Will this prevent certain groups of young people from finding out about the activity? Will the cost exclude certain young people?

Evaluation

The Evaluation of the planned activity is as important as the activity itself. Critical analysis allows the activity to be improved in the future and also highlights reasons why an activity did not go as well as planned. Evaluation should include producing a record of the programmed activity. Photographic, video, audio or written evidence can prove invaluable should the same activity be programmed in the future.

You could consider approaches to evaluating the activity in the context of equalities to test if there was equality of opportunity and equality of service (see Evaluation section)

Example 2

Using the NAOMIE model to plan an awareness activity on an equality issue

NAOMIE

Needs

Reports suggest that disability hate crime is on the rise in the area. Young people have been reported as aggressors and victims. I believe the young people attending the youth club require more information on disability and reporting hate crimes.

Disabled young people attend the youth club. I will speak to the young people at the planning stage to let them know about the activity and to gather their thoughts on any potential issues that may arise.

Aims

The aim of the activity is to raise young people's awareness of disability and hate crime.

Objectives

Standards to be achieved:

Young people understand differences in physical and learning disabilities

Young people understand that disabled people are individuals

Young people understand what disability hate crime means

Young people know how to report disability hate crime

Devise pre and post activity questionnaire to assess participants' learning

Quiz to check understanding of the issues

Method

Pre-activity questionnaire

Play YouTube film on disability awareness

Introduce facilitator from Interplay¹³

Discussion led by myself (am I confident in my knowledge of disability issues to lead the discussion? If not, how will I rectify the situation?) Produce information sheet based on information from Safer Wales website

Quiz

Distribute post-activity questionnaire (provide support for young people with known difficulties in reading and writing)

¹³ Amongst the other brilliant things they do, Interplay can provide training to young people on disability awareness <http://www.interplay.org.uk/>

Implementation

Resources required for the activity

Workshop room, including Wifi enabled laptop and a projector – needs to be booked through the club administrator at least 1 month in advance

Contact Interplay to arrange for a facilitator to attend - 1 month in advance

Confirm details with Interplay one week before the activity is planned

Produce and distribute flyer to let young people know about the activity (ensure distribution points allow equality of opportunity)

Ask two other members of staff to attend (how knowledgeable are they on disability issues?)

How can any gaps in knowledge be addressed?)

Timings for a 1 ¾ hour activity

Start with the pre-activity questionnaire - 10 minutes

Film from YouTube – 5 minutes

Interplay - 40 minutes

BREAK – 20 minutes (follow usual youth club break procedures)

Discussion on hate crime and reporting mechanisms (provide information sheet)– 10 minutes

Quiz – 10 minutes

Finish with the post-activity questionnaire – 10 minutes

Evaluation

The following are examples of evaluation methods¹⁴ you could use to measure an activity and whether it has helped to raise awareness of a particular issue. You should take account of the young people's literacy levels.

¹⁴ Adapted from Evaluations and endings, Activities for reviewing work with young people, Vanessa Rogers, The National Youth Agency 2003

Evaluation questionnaire

Name:

Date:

Please have a look at the questions below and answer them as fully as you can

1. What was the most interesting part of the session you have just taken part in?

2. Which part was the least interesting to you?

3. Was the information relevant/useful to you?

4. Have you done similar sessions before? What and where?

5. Did you learn anything new? If yes, what did you learn?

6. What other areas did you expect to be covered?

7. What else would you like to look at in future sessions?

8. Finally, if another young person was interested in taking part, how would you describe what you have been doing?

Evaluation letter

This evaluation sheet is easy to complete as it is devised as a letter proforma. The young person just has to fill in the gaps! The aim of the letter is to encourage young people to offer feedback and reflect on an experience.

You will need: Copies of the evaluation letter (below) and pens.

When the young person has completed the letter, you could discuss the feedback with the young person.

Date: _____

Dear _____

The bit I enjoyed most about this session was _____

If we did it again _____

would make it even better. Three things I learnt from today are _____

and _____ and _____

Before next time the goals I have set myself are: _____

See you soon

From: _____

Photographic, video, and audio evidence can also prove invaluable should the same activity be programmed in the future.

For feedback on whether the young people feel they were treated fairly during any session/activity, refer to Section 6.

5. Key equality areas in youth work

For the purposes of this handbook we have identified the following key equality areas, which have the greatest impact on youth work delivery in Wales.

- Age
- Disability
- Sex and Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Race and ethnicity
- Religion and belief
- Economic inequality
- Welsh language

Most are covered by the Equality Act 2010 (the protected characteristics), whilst economic inequality and the Welsh language are not.

Remember the Act does enable you to go further, by allowing you to take positive action in favour of young people who face persistent discrimination and/or high levels of poverty and social exclusion.

We will now address each of these areas individually, providing some context on the issues, practical support on how to engage fairly with young people possessing these characteristics, and finally a section on resources and activities you can use to raise all young people's awareness of the particular issue.

It is worth remembering that young people will possess a combination of the above characteristics, so we advise you to look at this section in its entirety to gain the best possible understanding of the range of equality issues you face as a youth worker.

Age

“Ageism is a negative bias against a person or group of people on the grounds of age”¹⁵

As a youth worker, your entire ‘client group’ (ie young people aged anywhere between 11-25) will possess this characteristic.

Any youth worker who discriminates against young people should seriously ask themselves if they are in the right job or profession!

Thus, this section isn’t necessarily about ensuring equality of opportunity and service to young people in a youth work context. It’s more about what you can do as a youth worker to ensure young people are treated fairly and equally in every aspect of their lives.

Context and issues to consider

Did you know?

Teenagers may have a lack of voice and say in the decisions that influence them

Young teenagers have few places to meet with friends – too old for the youth club (where one exists) but too young for the pub. If they congregate on the street corner, or in the park, there is evidence that they are likely to be moved on by the police. One of the definitions of anti-social behaviour is young people gathering on street corners

There is evidence of some ‘demonisation’ of children and young people in the media which may feed into prejudicial attitudes towards them which, in turn, can lead to discrimination¹⁶

You could encourage young people accessing your services to get their voices heard by:

- Becoming involved in the [Funky Dragon’s Youth Forum](#) locally
- Keeping an eye out for projects or initiatives which enable young people to get their voices heard

[Participation Workers Wales Network](#) promotes the participation of children and young people (0-25) in decision-making in Wales.

Your youth club or service may have an age range or limit (eg under 18s only). Consider whether local demand suggests that you should broaden the age range. If there are a handful of older young people interested, why not engage them as volunteers or peer mentors?

Young and older people tend to fall victim to ageism. You may want to consider initiatives that bring the two generations together. An [initiative](#) in Rhondda Cynon Taff shows the mutual benefits of bridging the gap between generations (the example refers to primary school aged children but this could work for secondary aged young people too!)

As well as changing some commonly held perceptions of young people it’s important to make young people aware of their rights and responsibilities.

¹⁵ <http://www.diversiton.com/Ageism/AgeDiversity.asp>

¹⁶ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/research/111026stateen.doc>

Good practice example

Shelter Cymru is Wales' people and homes charity. Its Education and Youth Service provides opportunities for young people to influence decision making in housing and homelessness. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation commissioned an initiative called a [Young Person's Charter for Change in Housing](#). Shelter Cymru recruited young people by contacting Funky Dragon (who provided details of local youth forums), a range of youth-orientated organisations and student volunteering schemes. The young people aged 16-25 completed a series of training workshops before carrying out peer-research on a range of housing topics. They summarised their findings into a Charter, which contains a number of recommendations. The young people presented to the Head of Housing at the Welsh Government in a launch event. The young people continue to use the Charter as a campaigning tool to improve young people's housing options in Wales and beyond.

Practical solutions

We can't assume that all youth workers will have easy access to up-to-date information on the issues affecting young people in Wales today.

Children in Wales is the national umbrella organisation for those working with children and young people in Wales. Their [website](#) provides information on current policy and practice. Children in Wales' work could provide ideas for local campaigning or lobbying projects, to ensure young people's voices are heard. Funky Dragon's resources '[Create Change – Take Action](#)' can also help with planning a campaign.

Funky Dragon has also produced tools to investigate the [media's portrayal of young people](#).

Raising young people's awareness of age and ageism

It's important that young people learn about age and ageism so they can identify and challenge age related discrimination. Young people should be aware of their rights and responsibilities to help them grow and fulfil their potential. Improving inter-generational relations will help build more inclusive and cohesive communities.

You could include the following ideas as an awareness raising activity on age and ageism. Remember to use the NAOMIE model to help you plan the proposed activity. This will help focus your activity and ensure the best possible outcomes for the young people

The following activities can help you plan and include age awareness in your youth work delivery:

[Children Should be Seen and Not Heard - Agree or Disagree](#)

[Images of Young People - 'Hoodies + Hoodlums' or 'Helpful + Hardworking'](#)

[Ageism and stereotypes](#)

Disability

“A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”¹⁷

“Recognising and respecting differences in others, and treating everyone like you want them to treat you, will help make our world a better place for everyone. You don't have to be disabled to be different. Everyone is different!”

*Kim Peek, inspiration for the film Rainman*¹⁸

Context and issues to consider

Colleagues have developed a methodology handbook called Young People with Disabilities ([link to Handbook](#)). We **strongly** recommend that you consult this handbook in conjunction with this section to gain a sound understanding of disabilities in a youth work context.

Did you know?

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and disabled pupils are more likely to be bullied

Young disabled people are more likely than others to be NEET

There is evidence of significant and rising incidence of hate crime against disabled people¹⁹

In the context of youth work and equalities, we cannot talk about including young persons with a disability if we are not involving young persons without a disability.

You may consider organising trips or activities exclusively for young people with special needs, but this can be considered a form of exclusion and inequality. Real inclusion is about interacting 'normally' with other young people and adults. So part of a disability organisation's work is to bring the young people they have in their care into contact with other young people in a positive way.

Youth workers and disability organisations should not miss the opportunity to work together to develop mixed-ability activities and projects.

Some national projects/organisations you could contact with a view to developing mixed-ability provision:

[SNAP Cymru](#)

[Disability Sport Wales](#)

[Disability Arts Wales](#)

[Learning Disability Wales](#)

¹⁷ <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/protected-characteristics-definitions/>

¹⁸ <http://www.ycni.org/downloads/publications/DiverseAbility.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/research/111026stateen.doc>

Practical solutions

Unless you have been trained or have practical experience in the field, you may have concerns about engaging with young people who have a disability.

Two excellent resources, containing tips on working with young people with a disability are available [here](#) and [here](#). (Both resources have been produced in Northern Ireland, so bear this in mind if you are looking at some of the legal stuff in the documents).

Disability hate crime

Disability hate crime is a real issue in Wales. Find out [more](#) and learn about what you can do to ensure that it does not go un-reported amongst young people you are working with.

Safer Wales can also provide information through their [Anti-Hate Crime project](#).

You should let the police know if you suspect a hate crime has taken place.

In an Emergency don't delay
If it's not an Emergency
Or call Victim Support

Phone 999
Phone 101
08456121900

Raising young people's awareness of disability

It's important that **all** young people learn about disability; young people who have a disability and young people who don't.

You could include the following ideas as an awareness raising activity on disability. Remember to use the NAOMIE model to help you plan the proposed activity. This will help focus your activity and ensure the best possible outcomes for the young people.

The following links and activities can help you plan and include disability awareness in your youth work delivery:

[Bully for you](#) (available to purchase)

[The Red Cross](#)

You could build an activity around the questions and issues raised in this [article](#)

Contact [Interplay](#) for ideas on raising awareness of disability

Sex and Gender

“The careers adviser at our sixth form college seems to think that there are still ‘girls’ jobs and ‘boys’ jobs”. I told her I was interested in becoming a plumber. She wasn’t very helpful and said it was difficult for girls to get taken on as apprentices. She told my best mate Ryan that midwifery was no place for a young guy”²⁰

Context and issues to consider

It would be useful to make the distinction between sex and gender. Put simply, “sex is between the legs and gender is between the ears”²¹

Gender	Sex
Social/ historical construction Way of thinking and feeling Position in the society Identity - way to introduce yourself Cultural differences Discrimination Different meanings in different cases	Biological, natural Physical differences Body

However, whatever the distinction, you must be careful not to discriminate on the grounds of sex or gender.

Did you know?

Trans is an umbrella term. It includes cross-dressers, transgender and transsexual people as well as anyone else who is in any way gender variant²²

What about single-sex youth groups? Girlguiding is an example of the success of single sex youth provision. It’s not our intention to spark debate on sex and gender equality in this context. The aim of this section is to ensure sex and gender equality when a youth service, club or activity is open to all.



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²⁰ http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualRightsRespect/worksheet30-equality_act_2010_factsheet-accessible.doc

²¹ http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_074252.pdf

²² http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_074252.pdf

²³ <http://www.feministwebs.com/resources/exploring-difference/>

Good practice example

'Boy scouts no more'. This timeline shows how the Scouts developed from single-sex provision to allowing boys and girls to join:

- 1976: girls allowed to join Venture Scouts, age range 15 to 20, but not younger groups
- 1990: girls may join any age range in some UK scout groups - but not all groups sign up
- 2007: in its centenary year, the Scout Association decrees that girls may join any UK scout group

This [article](#) suggests that Scouts Wales are seeking to provide equality of opportunity to young men and women.

Practical solutions

How can you ensure you are not discriminating against young people on the grounds of sex and gender?

- Establish standards of responsibility and behaviour and hold yourself and others to account. Show your personal and organisational commitment to gender equality and maintain these high expectations in your colleagues
- Use language and behaviour that is non-biased and inclusive
- Actively listen to and learn from others' experiences. Don't make light of the young people's concerns and try to see situations through their eyes
- Challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviour. Ignoring the issues will not make them go away and silence can send the message that you agree with these attitudes and behaviours. Make it clear that you will not put up with sexual jokes or slurs²⁴

The NHS has produced [A guide for young trans people in the UK](#). This guide will help you understand the issues facing young trans people.

Hate crime

Safer Wales provides information on hate crime relating to gender identity through their [Anti-Hate Crime project](#).

You should let the police know if you suspect a hate crime has taken place.

In an Emergency don't delay
If it's not an Emergency
Or call Victim Support

Phone 999
Phone 101
08456121900

²⁴ <http://www.feministwebs.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/welcome-audit-for-equality-and-diversity-halton.doc>

Raising young people's awareness of sex and gender

You could include the following ideas as an awareness raising activity on sex and gender issues. Remember to use the NAOMIE model to help you plan the proposed activity. This will help focus your activity and ensure the best possible outcomes for the young people.

<http://www.feministwebs.com/resources/exploring-difference/>

[My Transsexual Summer](#) is a Channel 4 series that follows seven people who are undertaking a range of gender affirmation procedures as they make the journey to realise their true identities

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is a combination of emotional, romantic, sexual or affectionate attraction to another person. In other words, it's about who you are attracted to, fall in love with and want to live your life with. The majority of women and men are heterosexual and they experience attraction and seek partners of the opposite sex.

The term 'gay' is used to describe a man who has an emotional and/or sexual orientation towards men. The term 'lesbian' is associated exclusively with women and describes a woman who has an emotional and/or sexual orientation towards women. Some women also define as gay rather than lesbian.

Other women and men can experience sexual and romantic feelings for both their own and the opposite sex and such people are bisexual.

This section will use the term LGB to describe people who are Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual.

Context and issues to consider

"All young people want places to go and things to do in an environment where they feel valued and accepted. A lesbian, gay or bisexual young person who does not feel included and welcome at services for young people, such as youth clubs, sport teams and after school groups, may seek support and a community elsewhere.

Some lesbian, gay and bisexual young people hope to find this in pubs and clubs even if they are underage and this makes them more likely to make unsafe choices.

It is therefore important to make sure lesbian, gay and bisexual young people feel included and are able to meet other young people, including other lesbian, gay and bisexual young people, in a safe environment. Schools and other agencies should ensure that lesbian, gay and bisexual young people are welcome in all local services and take steps to identify local lesbian, gay and bisexual youth provision²⁵

Homophobic bullying and other issues affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual young people can arise in any setting. As a youth worker you have an important role to play in tackling homophobia and promoting positive attitudes towards the lesbian, gay and bisexual young people community. All youth workers, whether they are working on projects specifically for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people or not, can have a key role to play in promoting positive attitudes towards LGB people. Homophobic bullying can occur in any setting - including youth groups and centres. If you hear the young people you work with using phrases like "that's so gay" or "you're so gay" or engaging in other forms of homophobia then you have a role to play in challenging this.

Local youth groups for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) young people are often an early point of contact for young people who are coming to terms with their sexual orientation. Youth groups can support LGB young people by providing essential information, resources and opportunities to meet other LGB young people not available at school.

²⁵ http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_school/education_for_all/quick_links/education_resources/4534.asp

Did you know?

The Government has estimated that six per cent of the population, around 3.6 million people in the UK, are lesbian, gay or bisexual²⁶ (so there's a good chance that in a group of 30 at least two young people will be lesbian, gay or bisexual)

Young people tell Stonewall that they generally realise they are lesbian, gay or bisexual when they are aged 12 or 13 but many don't tell anyone until they are 16 or over²⁷

Lesbian, gay and bisexual young people are two and a half times more likely to go to a pub and club rather than a youth group²⁸

Practical solutions

1. Language do's and don'ts

Avoid using the term homosexual as much as possible. Its history lies in a term used to describe a mental disorder and moral deficiency. The terms gay and lesbian are now widely known as terms to describe someone's sexual orientation. A person should not be referred to as 'a gay', rather that they 'are gay'.

The word 'gay' is often misused, and used in a negative way. If you hear homophobic language, always try to challenge this and show young people that this language is not acceptable. Stonewall has produced an excellent guide on [Challenging homophobic language](#)

Don't presume a person's sexual orientation or make assumptions. Heterosexist language which assumes that a person is straight can be awkward, uncomfortable or offensive. Avoid using gendered language such as asking if a person has a girlfriend/boyfriend, the term 'partner' is far more neutral and inclusive.

2. Supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual young people

Stonewall's Education Guide on [Supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual young people](#) provides essential information for anyone working in the youth sector.

Recent changes in the law mean that we have a responsibility to support all young people - including those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

The guide covers how adults can indicate to young people that they will be supportive of any young person who is lesbian, gay or bisexual, and how to respond if a young person comes out and how to support them once they have come out. It also provides top ten tips and features good practice examples from Stonewall [Education Champions](#).

What is homophobia?

"Homophobia is the irrational hatred, intolerance, and fear of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people"

²⁶ http://www.stonewall.org.uk/what_we_do/research_and_policy/2880.asp

²⁷ http://www.stonewall.org.uk/media/current_releases/3910.asp

²⁸ http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_school/education_for_all/quick_links/education_resources/4534.asp

These negative feelings fuel the myths, stereotypes, and discrimination that can lead to violence against LGB people.

Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying causes permanent damage to young people. Making all young people - regardless of their sexuality - feel included and valued is a major opportunity for education and youth services to transform the lives of a significant number of young people.

The information in [Tackling Homophobia in Secondary Schools](#) can be easily applied in youth work settings and provides top ten recommendations for facing this issue head-on.

Good practice example

“Recently I ran a session in a Pupil Referral Unit - alternative education provision for young people who find it hard to conform to the norms of mainstream schooling. In the session we watched one of the chapters of the Stonewall FIT DVD, played games and had a discussion around the effects of bullying. At the start of the session the young people said they could recognise if a person was gay straight away. As we watched the FIT DVD the young people started to realise that it was not always possible to know someone's sexuality just by looking at them and to question some of their views. By the end of the session the young people started to realise that some of the comments they used to make could be hurtful and that it does not really matter what someone's sexuality is as we are all the same. They talked about some of the effects of their behaviour on other people - including not doing anything or laughing at what people say. Their views were challenged and they were prepared to think more about their future actions”²⁹

Area Youth & Community Worker

Hate crime

Safer Wales provides information on hate crime relating to sexual orientation through their [Anti-Hate Crime project](#).

You should let the police know if you suspect a hate crime has taken place.

In an Emergency don't delay
If it's not an Emergency
Or call Victim Support

Phone 999
Phone 101
08456121900

Raising young people's awareness of LGB issues

You could include the following ideas as an awareness raising activity on LGB issues. Remember to use the NAOMIE model to help you plan the proposed activity. This will help focus your activity and ensure the best possible outcomes for the young people.

[FIT DVD](#) and supporting activities

[Stonewall Cymru](#) and [Stonewall](#) can provide further information and support on LGB and youth issues.

²⁹ http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_school/education_for_all/youth_workers/4169.asp

Race and Ethnicity

The term '*race*' technically refers to the biological or genetic differences between people with different skin colour, hair and so on, while '*ethnicity*' refers to a person's cultural background or allegiance. However, in practice the terms are often used interchangeably and both 'race' and 'ethnicity' are subjective labels and boundaries are often blurred or labels disputed.

Context and issues to consider

In terms of youth work it is important for all youth workers to be aware of the need to offer all young people, regardless of their 'race' or 'ethnicity', equality of opportunity to access your service, as well as equality of service once they come through the door. However, equality does not necessarily mean treating everyone the same, and it is important to be aware that some young people from certain racial or ethnic groups may have needs which are slightly different to the general youth population in Wales, or may require services to be delivered in a way which is more accessible for them, because of their cultural or ethnic background.

Did you know?

In Wales and the UK, there is a high level of inequality between people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds, and this is also true amongst young people. This inequality manifests itself in levels of health, education, unemployment, housing and community safety, and, overall, ethnic minorities do worse in all of these areas, although there is also significant variation between ethnic groups. So, one size does not fit all! You can find out more about race inequality in Wales [here](#) and [here](#).

Practical solutions

In Wales, organisations can give you more information on race and ethnicity, these include:

- [Ethnic Youth Support Team](#)
- [African Community Centre](#)
- [Somali Integration Society](#)
- [Displaced People in Action](#)

It is very important that both youth workers and young people have the opportunity to learn about the diverse communities who live in Wales, and about how race or ethnicity may affect a young person. All of the above organisations offer training on these issues, which will help you and your clients to become more aware.

[Working with young people from a minority ethnic background](#) can also provide some useful guidance (just be mindful that this resource was produced in Ireland so the legal stuff won't be relevant).

Hate crime

Safer Wales provides information on hate crime relating to race and ethnicity through their [Anti-Hate Crime project](#).

You should let the police know if you suspect a hate crime has taken place.

In an Emergency don't delay
If it's not an Emergency
Or call Victim Support

Phone 999
Phone 101
08456121900

Religion and belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition³⁰

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination because of religion or religious or philosophical belief. To be protected, a person must belong to a religion that has a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief, for instance Protestants and Catholics within Christianity. A philosophical belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a belief about a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour – so, for example, humanism is a philosophical belief³¹

For youth work, this means that it is unlawful to discriminate against a young person because of their religion or belief or lack of religion or belief (e.g. they if they are atheists).

You are protected if someone discriminates against you because they **think** you are a certain religion, when you are not. For example, it's against the law for someone to discriminate against you for wearing a headscarf because they think you are a Muslim, even if you are not actually Muslim.

Discrimination **by association** is also against the law. For example, it is against the law to refuse to let you into a restaurant because of the religion of someone who is with you.

Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and victim share the same religion or belief – for example, discrimination on grounds of being Sunni or Shia within Islam, or discrimination on grounds of being Protestant or Catholic within Christianity.

More information on duties and exceptions under the Equality Act 2010 are here

Context and issues to consider

Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism are just two forms of religious discrimination, but many others may exist, and it is important that youth workers take every opportunity to challenge religious stereotypes and prejudice and to promote tolerance and respect for diversity.

Did you know?

The word “Islam” means both “peace” and “submission”. Islam is the second largest religion in the world with over one billion followers. The 2001 census recorded 1,591,000 Muslims in Britain, around 2.7% of the population. There are several different groups of Muslims, but for all of them faith is regarded as a major part of their identity.

Islamophobia is the fear, hatred or hostility directed towards Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia can be expressed in a number of ways, for example, verbal and physical abuse and violence against Muslims, and attacks on mosques³²

³⁰ <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/protected-characteristics-definitions/>

³¹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance/vcs-religion-belief?view=Binary>

³² <http://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/sass/ValuingDiversityExploringFaithandCulture.pdf>

Raising young people's awareness of religion and belief

As important as not discriminating against young people, is ensuring that youth workers increase the awareness and understanding of young people about different religions and beliefs.

Youth work has a unique role to play due to its participatory nature and the ability of young people to be promoters of change. For more information on this:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Training/Training_courses/2008_Baku_Youth_Initiative_en.pdf

You could include the following ideas as an awareness raising activity on religion and belief. Remember to use the NAOMIE model to help you plan the proposed activity. This will help focus your activity and ensure the best possible outcomes for the young people.

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/sass/ValuingDiversityExploringFaithandCulture.pdf>

For information and resources tackling prejudice and misunderstanding across all faith traditions, see the following resource book: A sense of respect: interfaith activities for young people, by Maxine Green. National Youth Agency www.nya.org.uk

Hate crime

Safer Wales provides information on hate crime relating to religion through their [Anti-Hate Crime project](#).

You should let the police know if you suspect a hate crime has taken place.

In an Emergency don't delay
If it's not an Emergency
Or call Victim Support

Phone 999
Phone 101
08456121900

Economic inequality

Economic inequality, deprivation and poverty are extremely sensitive issues, in particular in a youth work context. Whilst these three issues have separate definitions and slightly different meanings, for the purpose of this handbook we will use the terms interchangeably to refer to how limited finances can act as a barrier to young people accessing youth provision.

Some youth services and clubs are free whilst other charge a fee. Extra activities (eg trips) also often incur a charge. You should also be conscious of associated costs, for example using public transport to get to a youth club. This can be a particular issue for young people living in rural areas.

Voluntary engagement is one of the fundamental aspects of youth work.

“...young people should choose to engage or end their involvement...Some of the most disadvantaged young people are reluctant to engage for a range of reasons, yet could benefit most from the skilled intervention and support available through the Youth Service. We expect the Youth Service to be pro-active in involving hard to reach young people wherever they are and whatever their circumstances by offering appropriate provision, support and activities to ensure equality of opportunity, without sacrificing voluntary engagement”.

Thus you need to consider whether all young people have a choice in engaging or if they are being prevented from doing so for economic reasons.

You will be generally aware of the ‘economic profile’ of the young people accessing your services. The [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (WIMD) offers an insight into the most deprived areas in Wales. However, you should also be aware of the range of ‘economic profiles’ of the young people accessing your services. A youth club in what is deemed a ‘deprived’ area according to the WIMD could include young people who are relatively affluent.

Context and issues to consider

Did you know?

The UK is the fourth largest economy in the world but conversely has one of the highest levels of child poverty of all industrialised countries...figures show that 32 per cent of children in Wales are living in poverty, higher than the British average³³

Young people (16-24) experience the highest rates of unemployment. Young people also receive lower levels of social security benefits, and a lower level of the minimum wage³⁴

Practical solutions

These are tough times and we know that cuts in Youth Services funding will place even greater pressure on youth workers’ ability to provide services to young people.

We know you haven’t got a magic credit card or an endless pot of money to provide free or heavily subsidised services for young people.

³³ <http://www.endchildpovertycymru.org.uk/areasofwork/childpoverty/endchildpovertynetwork.html>

³⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/research/111026stateen.doc>

Confidentiality and sensitivity are key to find non-stigmatising ways to subsidise the cost of trips, activities and essential equipment.

You need to be mindful of the potential financial implications in planning any activity. You also need to encourage young people to consider costs when consulting them on a programme of activities or event/s. This includes being responsible for managing their expectations.

Fundraising can be a good way to raise some money (and awareness) for your club or service. There are hundreds of fun and engaging ways to do this. You should again be mindful of how you engage the young people (i.e do the young people need to contribute financially?)

Tackling Child Poverty in Wales: A Good Practice Guide is a booklet asking teachers to contribute to tackling the issue of child poverty in Wales by recognising key contributory factors and by taking practical steps within schools. It is available by scrolling down [here](#) and can also be applied in a youth work setting.

Raising young people's awareness of financial issues

Youth workers are not expected to wave a magic wand and increase the wealth of the young people they work with. Not in the real world anyway!

However, youth workers can play an important part in raising young people's awareness of financial issues and help them prepare for managing their money, however little or much they may have.

You could use resources on the [Welsh Government's Financial Education website](#) in an awareness raising activity on financial literacy. Remember to use the NAOMIE model to help you plan the proposed activity. This will help focus your activity and ensure the best possible outcomes for the young people.

Welsh language and bilingualism

“Youth work through its practice should...recognise the importance and value of the Welsh language and the need to promote its use”³⁵

“I think we are fast approaching the time when the United Nations should start to think seriously about abolishing other languages. What’s the point of Welsh, for example? All it does is provide a silly maypole around which a bunch of hotheads can get all nationalistic.”
*Jeremy Clarkson*³⁶

“Bilingual youth provision has long been recognised and validated. However, there is a need to increase and expand the number and nature of bilingual youth work settings in Wales to meet the need of the growing numbers of bilingual young people in Wales”³⁷

Context and issues to consider

We very strongly suggest that you consult the *Supporting Welsh Language Youth Work* (link to handbook) handbook in considering how to ensure equality of opportunity and access in the context of youth work and the Welsh language. Another excellent resource is [Opening Both Doors](#), which provides a practical introduction to bilingual youth work in Wales.

Did you know?

The Welsh language is one of the oldest in Europe, and with around 21%³⁸ of the population able to speak the language it remains a significant part of people’s lives in Wales. Many people throughout Wales use Welsh on a daily basis, and so creating a society where the language is treated with as much importance as English is important in creating a more equal society.

The Welsh Language Measure became law in February 2011. It confirms the official status of the Welsh language. It also creates a Welsh Language Commissioner with strong enforcement powers to protect the rights of Welsh speakers to access services through the medium of Welsh³⁹.

Not all youth work settings have Welsh-speaking staff and/or volunteers but many of the young people attending will have at least some written and spoken competence.

Good practice example

The *Kids Fun Club* in Rhyl is a social club for children and young people with special needs.

The one factor that was missing was the ability to make use of the Welsh language. Many of the children and young people who attended the club enjoyed Welsh lessons in school, but there weren't many opportunities for them to participate in social activities through the medium of Welsh.

After a meeting with [Estyn Llaw](#), *Kids Fun Club* is now cooperating to introduce more Welsh elements to the club. The first step in the process was to hold training on bilingualism. Articles for the local Welsh language press were also written by Estyn Llaw to try to attract more Welsh speaking volunteers to the club. Estyn Llaw will also begin the process of

³⁵ Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales

³⁶ <http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/view/209894/Storm-over-Welsh-lingo-plea/>

³⁷ http://www.estynllaw.org/uploads/opening_both_doors__january_2010.pdf

³⁸ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=447>

³⁹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/welshlanguage/legislation/?lang=en>

forming a language scheme for the organisation.

By cooperating with Estyn Llaw the club is now looking forward to attracting more Welsh medium volunteers to enable members to sing, play games and act bilingually.⁴⁰

Practical solutions

How can you go about ensuring bilingual provision in your youth activity/club/centre?

We're not being lazy here but why re-invent the wheel, when there are some really good tips out there already?!

Go to Practical Solutions in the *Supporting Welsh Language Youth Work* handbook

Go to page 13 in [Opening Both Doors – an Introduction to Bilingual Youth Work](#)

Raising young people's awareness of the Welsh language and bilingualism

This is not necessarily about teaching young people how to speak Welsh, although learning a few new words along the way can't do any harm! Language awareness activities are aimed at making young people (whether fully bilingual, Welsh learners or non-Welsh speakers) aware of the importance of the Welsh language and why it's important to respect, protect and understand bilingualism in Wales.

Remember to use the NAOMIE model to help you plan any proposed activity. This will help focus your activity and ensure the best possible outcomes for the young people.

Contact your local Welsh Language initiative, [Menter Iaith](#) for language awareness resources.

The [Welsh Language Board](#) can also provide support for youth workers.

If you do want to take things a step further and encourage young people to learn about the benefits of speaking Welsh, why not devise an activity based on these [statements](#). Eg Agree/Disagree with the statements to encourage discussion and debate.

⁴⁰ Adapted, with permission from Kids Fun Club, Rhyl at <http://www.estynllaw.org/newyddion.php>

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