

**Information Services for Young people
Conference
Pencerrig Hotel, Builth Wells, Powys
Friday 27 November 1998**

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**Information Services for Young People Conference
Pencerrig Hotel, Bulth Wells, Powys**

**Friday, 27 November 1998
10.80am-4.00pm**

PROGRAMME

- 10.00am** Coffee, Registration Welcome
- 10.30am** and Introduction **Brian Williams**
Executive Director,
Wales Youth Agency
- 10.40am** Information Services for Young People in
Wales - The Way Ahead **Elise Stewart**
Development Officer,
Information Services for
Young People, Wales
Youth Agency
- 11.00am** Information Shop for Young People in Wales **Jim Humphreys**
A Vehicle for Youth Work Principal Youth and
Community Officer, Wrexham
County Borough Youth
Service
- 11.20am**
- Coffee**
- 11.30am**
- Working Groups
- 12.30pm**
- 1.45pm** Feedback from Working Groups Young
- 2.15pm** Scot - Another Perspective **Pat McMenamin**
Chief Executive
Europai, Ifjusagi Kartya
- 2.35pm** Meeting Young People's Information Needs **Dr. Mark Drakeford**
Lecturer in Social Policy
and Applied Social
Studies, University of
Wales
- 3.00pm** Question Time / Discussion
- 3.30pm** Coffee / Finish

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Brian Williams, Executive Director of the Wales Youth Agency welcomed the delegates to the Pencerrig Hotel. The response to the conference had been greater than anticipated with 75 delegates from 19 unitary authorities attending.

Elise Stewart Information Services for

Young People in Wales - The way ahead

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1983 | Young Scot Booklet |
| 1985 | International Youth Year
Launch of Canllaw - Online (3 issues 1985 - 1989) |
| 1990 | Electronic Noticeboard |
| 1991 | Launch of U26 Youth Card |
| 1991 | The Information Shop for Young People
Bradford Nottingham Accrington |
| 1992 | Taabww, Biz Kit, Healthy Delinquents |
| 1993 | HMI Inspection of Information Shops |
| 1994 | WYA & NYA joint co-operation on Information Shops and Database |
| 1997 | Launch of Database |
| 1998 | Information Services for Young People Conference |

What should an information service offer young people?

A service which is:	Free Person centred Client - led Non - directive Objective Empowering Confidential Non - judgmental Non - labelling Bilingual One stop Appointment free Independent Supportive of the Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales
Information which is:	Accurate Up to date Relevant Concise User friendly Broad focused Responsive to need national, regional and local
A place which is:	Accessible to all young people Physically accessible Psychologically accessible Comfortable Safe Appropriately resourced
Staff who are:	Professional Appropriately trained Informal Friendly
Access to:	Information Advice Counselling Advocacy A network of specialist providers

Definitions

Information	Providing requested facts or details. No recommendation regarding use, assessment or appropriateness.
Information Services For Young People	A generic term which will include information and any or all of the following terms:
Advice	Helping a person to change or cope with a practical issue or situation. Providing relevant information to enable an informed decision. May include possible outcomes or courses of action.
Counselling	An explicit agreement between client and counsellor with the aim of providing the client with the opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more resourcefully and towards greater well being. It is not about influencing by persuasion or argument. It is about enabling individuals to come to terms with their lives, reach a growing understanding of themselves, make decisions, set realistic goals and undertake appropriate action. (B.A.C.)
Advocacy	Negotiating, mediating or representing. Putting forward a case/cause or acting on behalf of another person. Three levels - informal, formal, public.
Referral	Involving a third party (from within or outside the agency) in the work with an individual.

Jim Humphreys

Information Shop for Young People in Wales - A Vehicle for Youth Work A comprehensive information strategy might include:

- The Wales Youth Agency Database
- Books or Survival guides
- Information Points
- Telephone Services

- Mobiles
- Information Shops

In times of limited resources those resources available should be directed:

- Towards those in greatest need or
- Where they can be most effective or
- Ideally both

Why Information Services?

- They are effective and sometimes change or save lives
- They are cost effective and reach a wide audience
- They are honest. Youth Workers and Young People share the same agenda
- Youth Workers do it better

Why Information Services?

- Information is the key to successful participation in today's increasingly complex and occasionally hostile society.
- Without information and the support to use it young people are disenfranchised and marginalised

What should an Information Shop offer young people?

- Accurate and up-to-date information
- Time
- Physical and Psychological accessibility
- Appropriate resources to support the work
- Free Service
- Appropriately trained staff
- A broad focus

- One-stop
- Choice to engage or disengage
- Self referral
- Client led
- Confidential
- Non-judgemental
- Non-labelling
- Services not problem based
- Non directive
- Objective
- Empowering Services

What makes an Information Shop work?

- Location
- Quality of service
- Resourcing
- Networking
- Marketing

General feedback from all working groups to SWOT analyses

Strengths

Identified need	Professional service
Network potential	Dedicated workers
Youth Service led Strategic approach Strong policies	Experience internally and externally from Youth Service
	Honesty

Approachability	Voluntary
Commitment to listening to young people	Full time project
Commitment to Youth	Working with other bodies
Understanding/knowledge of what you are trying to achieve	Information points
Team orientated	Strong infrastructure
Strong foundation - good youth service	Youth forum
Pooling of skills	Flexible staff
Need to be good at the delivery of the service (accessing information)	Telephone helpline
Understanding of the disadvantages faced by young people	Drop-in
Networks	Informal
Support from county youth service to reach a wider area of people	Access to IT
Staff with background in countywide provision	Knowing people and relationships
Established services	Young people first
Young people easier to reach in clubs	Needs led
Support	Multi-agency approach
High profile	Attractive to other agencies
Accessibility	Sharing resources/skills/expertise
Location	Skilled workers
Integrated department	Partnership
Positive and aspirational	The trust of young people
Run by young people	Expertise from other agencies
Training	Empathy with young people
Ability to access funding for young people throughout Wales	Young people-friendly
Established New organisation	Development of partnerships
	Plans in place
	Base to work from
	Location
	Senior management support

Enthusiasm/freedom	High profile
Defined roles	Quality of referral systems within the network
Discrete service	Focused on youth work agenda
Information is power	Positive links
Access to professionally trained staff	Rewarding

Weaknesses

Resources	Isolated working
Funding and the security of funding	Financial
Changing Government initiatives	Rural location
Policy that takes on board all implications	Image as librarians
Red tape	Lack of knowledge in other agencies
Lack of training - broad range of skills needed	Finding student placements
Location	Understaffed
Appropriateness of service	Under resourced
Enthusiasm	Lack of marketing
Not always sure of boundaries and expectations	All white males
Low knowledge base	Pressure experienced by a new project
Awareness and recognition of limitations	Invalid information
Support from employer	All things to all people
Service delivery strategic planning	Maintaining quality
People in power not being effective	Too many tasks
Access to quality training	Not enough staff time to give individual attention
Monitoring and evaluation and a clear focus	Investing too much in buildings
Cure vs. prevention?	Rural provision Lack of strategic approach
Funders target	Dependent on personal interest
Short term funding trends	

Youth Service image (outsiders perception)	Boundaries within your job
Focus on IT. and resources	Vulnerability of service
People	Accessibility
Imposition	Operational ties
Forcing young people to take up information issues	Not enough designated space
Threat	Recruitment of appropriate staff
Partnership - conflict of interests	Slow process
Funding - Ad hoc and short term	Time intensive

Opportunities

NCLB	Positive working partnerships
Government/ Welsh assembly focus on Youth Service	Use of identity to reach a wider audience
Information services provide an opportunity for the youth service to stand up and be counted. You can then plan other youth services based on what information services reveal.	On-going project Co-operation with other departments Development of contacts
Best value	Increase awareness
Strategic development	Empowering them to make decisions
Fear within various agencies re: working with young people	In hands of young people Entrepreneurial
OHMCI report recommendations	Always available
Big capacity for good work if done properly and clearly	Training
Time to draw up a corporate youth service document prior to the assembly	Build on project Voice to young people
External issues can be considered	Developing mobile provision
Older young people can be targeted	Multi agency group
Targeted work New young people and a new project	More training and networking Project development

I.T. and Internet opportunities for development
N.T.Os establishing a core of good practice
One stop shop
Important to recognise the work of the Wales Youth Agency overview as pivotal and proactive
Canllaw
Re-educate fund holders
Important that youth services lead the way in development

Y.O.T.S.

Increase peoples' awareness More money for a wider audience
Preventative work
To increase access to information services and focus on young people
Funding for information and communication technology
To receive things free - sponsorship

Threats

Sustainability
Maintainability
Qualitative and quantitative targets
Lack of finances
Inability to send people abroad to learn from other experiences
People getting worse service somewhere else
Disagreement between agencies on certain issues
Impact of budget Inadequacy of service
Competition for resources seen as professional
Organisations too protective of own services
Fear of losing ownership
Petty jealousy
Welsh assembly
Image changing due to crime

Conflict of interest between partnerships
Attractive to other agencies The conventional youth service Difficulties in advice and guidance Management of network Working to different agendas
Changing initiatives Monitoring performance Suspicion from other agencies Invasion of territory

Pat McMnamin

Young Scot - Another Perspective

Work with Schools

- They lose their long established school networks and have to build new ones
- They lose the security of their school - and their status as senior pupils
- They have difficulty finding the information they need in the outside world
- It's decision time
- It's reality time
- It can lead to isolation

Young Scot - Where is it now?

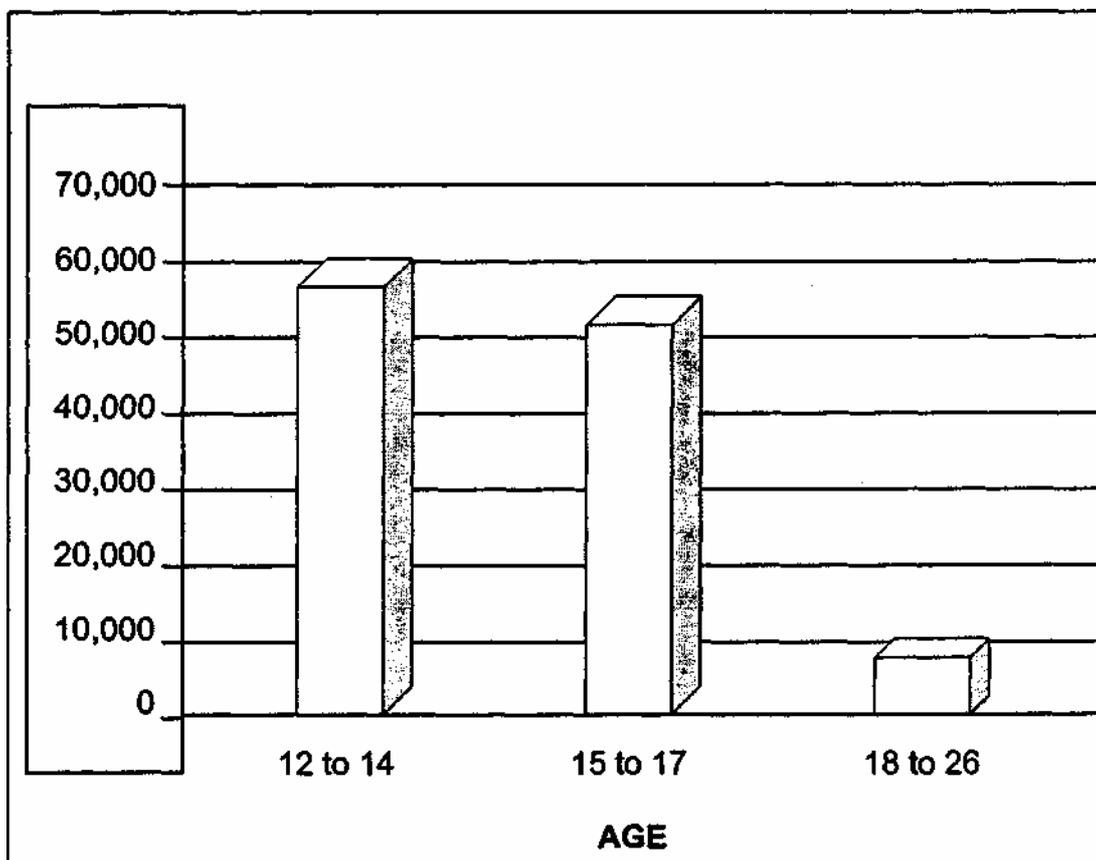
The Package

Networks

Development

Future

Young Scot Headlines,



- 125,000 Young Scot cardholders
- 2,000 discounts across Scotland
- Approximately 150,000 purchases each year in McDonald's with Young Scot cards
- Young Scot cardholders enjoy 30% off fares
- 1.8 million people read Young Scot Magazine each quarter in Daily Record
- the paper that puts the YOU in youth
- £45,000 distributed by the Post Office Young Scot Action Fund - Turns ideas into action
- Network of 160 sales points across Scotland
- 3,200,000 Euro<26 members across Europe
- 200,000 discounts available in 28 countries across Europe

The Package

- The Young Scot pack currently contains:

The Young Scot Book - The essential guide for young people

The Young Scot Book - Fun Size

The Young Scot Card

The Young Scot Discount Guide

The Young Scot Magazine

The Post Office Young Scot Action Fund

The Young Scot Free Legal Advice Line

The Young Scot Travel Line

All this for a very reasonable price indeed!

Networks Youth Enquiry Service

In Scotland, Young Scot is supported by a network of 62 Youth Enquiry Service points, providing local access to information, advice and counselling.

The European Youth Card Association

In Europe, Young Scot is supported by EYCA, the umbrella organisation for the "Euro<26" project. Since its launch with just five members, it has grown steadily to now include twenty eight countries around Europe.

Development over Time

- Young Scot has been continuously developed over the past 18 years since its inception in 1979.

- There are five key principles which have guided Young Scot in its development.

- It treats cardholders as young adults, and as individuals - for example

1989 - Young Scot National Conference

1997 - Supported first Commonwealth Youth Forum

- It provides access and information and advice, challenging young people to make informed choices, try out new experiences and take action - for example

Young Scot Book distributed to over 1,500,000 young Scots

1995-7000 young people pack the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall for 3 days. 180 stalls, 20 seminars, tailored for young people's needs.

- It values young people's views and involved them in the development of the package

1979 -ten young people recruited by the Scottish Community Education Centre to identify information needs of young people. Young Scot was part of the proposed solution.

1997 -focus groups held with first year secondary school pupils to identify information required for the new Young Scot Junior Pack

- It supports enterprise education in its broadest sense as an approach to leisure, learning and work. It backs young people's ideas in a direct way and recognises that competence and confidence stem from having the opportunity to turn your own ideas into action - for example

1989 -Young Scot Local Enterprise companies launched within Scottish schools

1994 - The Post Office Young Scot Action Fund launched - grants totalling over £45,000 given out to date.

- It views young people in a holistic manner and brings together agencies and organisations who provide specific services and information to young people, and have an interest in specific aspects of young people's lives - for example

Youth Enquiry Service developed between SCEC and local authorities.

Young Scot Junior Pack developed with Scotland Against Drugs

Current Development

Three new services

- To launch the Young Scot Hotline, a national youth telephone service for young people in Scotland.

- To promote a Young Scot in Europe Link based on the EC's Dialogue Youth project and the Young Scot EURO<26 network of 28 countries and magazines.

The Young Scot Youth Guarantee

- The Youth Guarantee will provide support and information for all young people in Scotland from their 4th year of secondary school and for at least two years after leaving school.

The support mechanisms:

- 4 year membership of Young Scot
- Young Scot Card

Key to accessing Young Scot services
 Young Scot Legal Advice Line Young
 Scot Travel Advice Line 2000 discounts in
 Scotland 200,000 discounts across
 Europe

Dr Mark Drakeford

Meeting Young People's Information Needs

The information needs of young people

The theme of today's conference is information and I know that I do not need to convince anyone here of the importance of this subject. At the risk of repeating what you already know, however, I wanted just to illustrate that basic point once again, by drawing on the field which I know best, that of social welfare. At the end of the twentieth century, poverty has come once again to be the defining characteristics of whole communities and, in particular, to mark the prospects of young people in such circumstances. Eighteen months into the New Labour government, the New Deal continues to hold out real prospects for those aged 18 and more. We are yet to see, however, any similar progress towards a reform of the system for those aged 16 or 17. To be this young and without an income will mean having to find yourself into one of the least generous and most deterrent parts of the welfare state. Before a claim will even be entertained, such a young person will have to have visited three different government departments, and in the right order. In parts of Wales these offices will lie geographically remote from one another. We know from research evidence that young people fail to make such journeys, both because they are simply without the money needed to travel by public transport and because the system is difficult enough to be defeating for those who are in conditions of distress. Even when they succeed in getting as far as making a claim, what will that claim be for? Will it be for Income Support or a transitional allowance or a bridging allowance or as part of a child benefit extension period or a severe hardship payment?

Without the information necessary to navigate this maze, a young person is literally penniless. Information is the difference between being able to eat and going hungry. Its importance, then, is profound.

Against that essential background, there are just three points which I want to make.

Firstly, I want to say, unambiguously and with emphasis, that information by itself is not enough. Provision of adequate information in accessible forms and places is the first step, but for many

young people who come to the attention of youth workers, this is a necessary but not sufficient condition. These young people also need information to be presented in a way which allows them to make sense of it and to turn that information to their advantage. The medium for doing so has to be the chance to discuss and learn from an adult whom that young person knows and trusts. In other words, the *human contact* which youth workers provide is an essential, not an additional, component of an information service for young people.

Secondly, however, it is necessary to say that relationships by themselves are a poor substitute for knowledge. When I say that I am a convinced supporter of the human service which youth workers provide, I want to draw a distinction between a fully informed and knowledgeable service and the sort of service which, again from research evidence, we know is too prevalent amongst social welfare practice generally. In order to be able to help the young person in the benefit maze, suggested earlier, a worker needs to be willing to undertake the hard and boring business of learning and keeping up to date with the essential information which will allow proper sense to be made of the position in which individuals find themselves. Sadly, the evidence is that workers are not always willing to do so and, even more worryingly, that they do not then allow that ignorance to stand in the way of giving advice. The sort of human contact which I wish to recommend to you today is very different. Information needs to be mediated, but that mediation must be skilled and knowledgeable, as well as motivated by a desire to help.

Thirdly, and rather differently, I want to suggest that the information needs of young people are not confined to giving information to them. They also need to have information given about them to the outside world. We live in a society which does not like young people - one which regards them with a combination of envy and fear. Youth workers are amongst a small and highly privileged group who are in a position to carry messages about what it really means to be young in contemporary Britain back to that wider society. That is an information need, as much as any other.

Indeed, my fourth and last point is that information about young people needs not simply to be disseminated, but that this passing of information needs to be carried out with a campaigning edge. Somewhere in the 1980s, social welfare professionals took fright. The jobs which we do had become politicised in a way which had not happened before - by a government which had no fondness for public service looking to see where that service could be reduced and removed. In that climate we stopped speaking up for young people and about what was happening to them. We have to recapture that voice, because the young people who most need information to be made available about them are the same young people who find it most difficult to have their own voice heard. We need, therefore, to do the uncomfortable business of being unpopular. That requires a campaigning edge, which brings information about young people into the public domain, with the purpose of achieving betterment in the circumstances which confront them.

To summarise, then: the information needs of young people demand giving reliable information to young people and assisting them in its interpretation and use. To provide a real information service demands as well a willingness to inform *about* young people, their problems, needs and potentials and to do so in a way which allows for that information to have an impact upon the acute and deepening difficulties faced by them. Then we would have an approach to information which meets the challenges which young people and those who work with them now face.

Question Time

The day was drawn to a close with a brief question time/discussion session chaired by Dr Howard Williamson, Vice Chair of the Wales Youth Agency.