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ROLE OF THE YOUTH SERVICE IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIPS

SEMINARS REPORT

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Role of the Youth Service in Young People's Partnerships

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Report on Consultations with the Youth Service on the 'Role of the Youth Service in Young People's Partnerships (YPPs)

1. PURPOSE OF CONSULTATION

- 1.1 It was agreed in 2002 by the Youth Policy Unit (YPU) and the Wales Youth Agency (WYA), that the WYA would undertake consultations about the emerging role of the Youth Service in Wales in the YPPs.
- 1.2 This consultation was following the publication of the original 'Extending Entitlement' document in 2000, 22 YPPs were proposed (i.e in each local authority) and details of their composition and role were given in the Direction and Guidance documents (published in draft form in November 2001, and finalised in July 2002). Initial strategy proposals were expected to be drawn up by September 2002. Due to this tight timetable the consultation was occurring in a period (January - March 2003) after the initial stage of the YPPs, in which an initial audit of services to young people should have been mapped against young people's needs with the aim to identify any gaps and duplications. However, little or no new delivery of service had yet been put in place.
- 1.3 This timing of the consultation raised issues about the content of the consultation. Whilst some in the YPPs, particularly the newly appointed co-ordinators, were likely to be keen to promote a clear work programme others were still attempting to come to terms with the implications of the YPPs. Should the focus of the consultation be to consider the purpose of the YPPs, and the Youth Service's role in them, linked to an exploration of the key underlying principles? Or could it be taken for granted that this had already occurred and now was the time to focus on priorities within work programmes of YPPs and specific issues arising for the Youth Service?
- 1.4 The answer to this dilemma was decided as much by practical considerations as evidence from the current situation. The Consultant employed (John Holmes) was keen to explore the implications of the key underlying principles, and whilst he had many conversations with those in the Youth Service about the implications of 'Extending Entitlement' he had no systematic knowledge of the working of the YPPs, and moreover in the timeframe for the consultation did not have the time to undertake the research to identify current issues. It is the Youth Policy Team based at the Welsh Assembly who have the role of linking to the YPPs, and as a result any consultation developed from the WYA had the limitation of being a step removed from current developments but the advantage of being outside observers with knowledge of the history and development of the Youth Service.

2. THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 2.1 A 15 page paper was written by the Consultant, circulated within the WYA, amended and then distributed in early February 2003 to a mailing list held at the WYA around 'youth policy'. This included Heads of Local Authority Youth Services in Wales, Voluntary Youth Organisations and their umbrella bodies, Course Leaders in Youth and Community Work Programmes in HE Institutes, the Youth Policy Team, CYWU and Estyn and some other organisations and individuals. To these were added YPP Co-ordinators, making a total of about 100. The Consultation paper was also put on the WYA website. Both those mailed to and those who went to the website were informed about 3 consultation events to be held in Carmarthen, Llandudno and Cardiff during March 2003. These were to be held during the day (10.30am - 3.00pm) and were free to participants, but limited to about 30 in each venue.

The paper that was circulated was called a 'draft position paper' and started with a note stating that it was written 'from within the WYA from our understanding of the principles of youth work, of the nature of the Youth Service in Wales, and our analysis of the intended role of YPPs'. The aim of the seminars was stated as to consult around the draft position paper, and then this lead to amendments and a final paper which it was hoped would influence future policy both at national and local levels.

- 2.2 The 3 planned seminars were held in March, and an additional one in early April in Cardiff because of the demand in the South Wales area and because of a clash of dates with a CWVYS meeting for the first one in South Wales. Approximately 115 delegates registered for the 4 seminars, with about 95 actually attending. The vast majority were from the Youth Service, with a majority of those from the local authority Youth Services. Recently appointed YPP Co-ordinators and representatives of the Children's Commissioner provided valuable additional perspectives to those from the Youth Service, who normally had been within the Youth Service for a good number of years. Whilst it was valuable to have senior managers at both national and local levels attending as primary policy makers in Wales, the voice of face-to-face youth workers, in particular part-time workers was not a major voice in the seminars.
- 2.3 The results from the evaluation (see appendix 1) show that overall the seminars were perceived as fairly successful, but the figures and a few additional comments also indicate quite a diversity of perceptions. This was most evident in the responses to 'I learned a lot' in which responses were widely spread. Some comments indicated that they wanted a more practical emphasis on the Role of the Youth Service in YPPs and that the keynote presentation did not do this. Others found the approach stimulating and valued thinking about underlying issues. This discrepancy reflects the dilemma discussed above (1.3) and the different interests of those attending.
- 2-4 This dilemma was also reflected in the balance between different parts of the day. The presentation and initial discussion of the key points raised in the paper lasted for 1 - 1 1/2 hours, followed by small group discussion and a plenary after the lunch break. Both the latter sessions raised a considerable number of issues, which will be discussed below, and were generally valued as a chance to share experiences within YPPs. However, the relationship between the paper/presentation and the group discussions was limited. From the perspective of the Consultant whose primary aim was to record comments to enable re-drafting of the paper there was some concern that the discussion was insufficiently focussed to allow this to happen. After the first seminar in Carmarthen a series of questions (see appendix 2) were included in participant's packs to try to focus the small group discussions, although it was made clear it was optional for groups to use this or not. Most chose not to, or did not get far down the list of questions, as they needed to share current issues about YPPs or focus on 1 or 2 themes.
- 2.5 Following the seminars it was decided by the Consultant not to re-draft the position paper as planned but rather to write a commentary on the seminars and try to capture the diversity of views and positions expressed. The following section details the points emerging from the small group/plenary sessions. It will not be possible to draw clear conclusions from these in terms of ways forward for the YPPs and the Youth Service because of the diverse and contradictory views expressed. It will lead to conclusions about the need for more clarity about the key questions that need to be faced if successful development is to occur.

3. MAIN POINTS FROM DISCUSSIONS IN SEMINARS

- 3.1 It could be argued that the format of both the position paper and the presentation encouraged diversity of thinking. The basic argument was that 3 underpinning concepts in 'Extending Entitlement', namely Social Inclusion, Partnerships and Learning, had multiple meanings, and it was important for the Youth Service to recognise that some meanings came much closer than others to a youth work approach. The intention was for this to focus participants thinking about the 10 Entitlements and which they would identify youth work more closely with. Whilst the possibility was raised that some work of the YPPs might be inappropriate for youth services to be involved with, the intention was not to encourage barriers to be put up around a narrow definition of youth work. Rather it was to encourage thinking about those areas of work, whilst not mainstream youth work, could best develop with youth work involvement. The example of basic skills work was given in the seminars as one possible area which often required a youth work approach to be successful. It cannot be said that clarity emerged from the discussions in terms of which types of work should fall into the 3 categories offered in the seminars, nor whether the specific example of basic skills should be chosen by the Youth Services as a key development area.
- 3.2 To explain the lack of clarity over these issues it is important to recognise that diversity of views occurred not just about the Role of the Youth Service in YPPs. Some participants were still asking the more fundamental question of whether the Youth Service should be involved in the first place. This was despite the fact, as acknowledged by many, that 'Extending Entitlement' had been broadly welcomed by the Youth Service after its publication in 2000, and compared favourably to the development of Connexions in England. However a number of factors since 2000 seemed to have led to a decline of commitment from some in the Youth Service.
- 3.3 There were concerns expressed that the term 'Youth Support Services' used in the Learning and Skills Act to apply to Wales, as well as in the documentation in England leading to Connexions implied both an intention to replace the Youth Service with a Youth Support Service. Some even expressed the view that YPPs were a step towards a Connexions type service in Wales. Liz Williams as Head of the Youth Policy Team denied both these claims at the first seminar (and her statement was repeated by the Consultant at later seminars). She stated that the term 'Youth Support Services' applied to the range of services to young people represented on the YPPs of which the Youth Service was one. It was important to note the plural in Youth Support **S**ervices and this reflected the partnership model of a number of services involved in YPPs. Secondly she stated that the Learning and Skills Act as applied to Wales did not allow for a move to a Connexions type service.
- 3.4 Despite these reassurances the new Estyn framework for inspections, which also talked about Youth Support Services and applied common criteria against young people's learning also raised concerns from within the Youth Service. In essence the concern was whether the distinctive nature of the Youth Service would be lost as common criteria were applied, and success or failure measured against a concept of support linked to too narrow a concept of achievement. Again some were looking over their shoulders to England and 'Transforming Youth Work' with their targets that 60% of youth work should lead to accredited achievement. This was linked to the 'Learning Country: Learning Pathways 14-19' document which despite the recognition of the importance of soft skills and 'personal and social development' has little role for the Youth Service beyond the idea of 'learning coaches', which by some was seen as moving away from youth work.

- 3.5 The above policy factors have to be seen in the context of resources or lack of them. 'Extending Entitlement' had been welcomed primarily because of the context of change from cutbacks in expenditure of the 1980s and 1990s, in particular of local authority youth services. With 'Extending Entitlement' there seemed to be a recognition that the youth work approach had real merit even to the extent of the 'entitlement approach' (which can be seen to derive from youth work) becoming the basis for all services to young people. However, some were increasingly concerned that they were being expected to deliver without the resources, and in timescales that were unrealistic. This was partly related to budgets and that increased funding was primarily linked to specified funding (e.g Cymorth) rather than core funding. There was some concern that the YPPs expected Youth Service core budget to be brought to the table but this did not apply to the 'big players' such as schools, colleges, police, HHS etc. It was clear that some from the voluntary sector, despite having representation on all YPPs through CWVYS, were holding a 'watching brief in terms of budget implications before being fully committed to the YPPs. In terms of common resources there were concerns that the shortage of trained and qualified youth workers could undermine the YPPs, as it was generally recognised that working in partnership with other services required a higher level of both skill and understanding of the youth work role even than in mainstream youth work.
- 3.6 It is important not to overplay the above underlying doubts about involvement in YPPs. The nature of most of the discussion was about how best to further involve the Youth Service in YPPs rather than concerns about getting involved in the first place. For some Principal Youth Officers a major concern was that they had not been given an automatic place on YPPs because in their view it was seen by them as their role to lead on YPP developments. This view was stated in another way through the perception that the Youth Service was already delivering the 'Extending Entitlement' agenda but was not given the recognition, in particular from the Youth Policy Team, for this. In some parts of Wales there was some criticism of the Youth Policy Team for not attending YPP meetings sufficiently, being unaware of the extent of existing Youth Service involvement in the 'new' agenda, and so seemingly wanting to change agendas unnecessarily.
- 3.7 This view that 'Extending Entitlement' was already occurring and mainly this needed acknowledging and extending through additional resources was one that contrasted strongly with the fears of YPPs being a step towards replacing the Youth Service. It also caused difficulties for the seminar process for it led participants to question whether there was a need to make decisions prioritising some work over others, anymore than they had already been doing for years. This view seemed to fit alongside the view that 'Extending Entitlement' was less about new agendas and priorities, and more about encouraging 'joined-upthinking', trying to ensure that gaps in provision were filled and duplication avoided.
- 3.8 A related view in the sense of questioning the extent to which there really were new agendas and priorities concerned listening to the voices of young people. It was argued that the central message of 'Extending Entitlement' was the need to respond to the needs and interest of young people, and to find effective ways to consult with and involve young people in decision making. If this was taken seriously then this would give answers to which of the 10 Entitlements should be prioritised, and the answer could vary between different parts of Wales. The contention in the paper that the Youth Service should decide which of the 10 Entitlements best fitted with youth work, even though it was acknowledged this would vary somewhat accordingly to local conditions, was seen as inappropriate. Representatives from the office of the Children's Commissioner in Wales, along with some of the recently appointed YPP Co-ordinators, were particularly keen to emphasise that the key role of the

Youth Service was to provide frameworks and structures to listen to young people rather than in any sense pre-determine the agenda.

- 3.9 In the paper and seminars the 10 Entitlements had been put in numerical order even though they had been in bullet points in the original documentation. It was suggested that the first two that are related to an education, training and work entitlement, and to a basic skills entitlement were seen as particularly important by government as they fitted the social inclusion agenda, particularly related to employability. Some at the seminars questioned this seeing all 10 as of equal importance and that if choices were made, say on the basis of stated young people's interests or a limited budget, then this would be acceptable.
- 3.10 A related point which stressed the importance of means rather than the Youth Service making choices about ends concerned the role of quality standards. It was argued by some that the policy context in Wales was significantly different both in terms of means and ends. The position taken in the paper and presentation was that whilst the means being employed in Wales to achieve policy objectives were significantly different in Wales (particularly around the nature of partnerships) the ends around social inclusion, with an emphasis on employability were essentially the same in different parts of the UK.

4. DIVERSITY AND REASONS FOR DIVERSITY

- 4.1 A key learning point for the Consultant from this experience, was to acknowledge the diversity that exists within the Youth Service in Wales. This is not only the differences that exist between the local authority and voluntary sectors but within these sectors, hi local authorities Youth Services exist in different departments and are accountable to different committees and officers. This clearly influences the extent to which there are strong links to schools, community services and social services. There would still seem to be a need for discussion of existing roles and priorities between the different partners, whilst trying to avoid the danger stated by some participants that the YPPs will become yet another 'talking shop'. In these discussions there is a need to be clear about terminology such as 'services to young people', 'Youth Service', the 'voluntary sector', 'Youth Support Services' and 'youth work'. Colin Heslop, a lecturer from NEWI, made this point after receiving the paper and whilst there is a danger that this will add to what some participants fear will lead to more 'navel gazing' it has to be recognised that there has been a fragmentation in youth work in recent years. This is a result of cutbacks and the need to move to attract outside funding for project/issue-based work. If partnerships are to work successfully people do need to know where they are coming from as well as where they are going.
- 4.2 It is important to return to the point raised previously (2.5) about the diverse and contradictory views expressed in the seminars and ask why was it so difficult to gain a consensus? Partly it would seem this is because of the very diversity of the Youth Service (and that others participating would rather identify with one or the other of the terms given above in 4.1). It has also been acknowledged that participants wanted the chance in the small groups and plenary to share experiences and raise their issues rather than focus on the questions raised directly by the paper (see appendix 2). It is also possible that some participants felt that these seminars were not the place to make statements that might tie their hands, especially with members of the Youth Policy Team and Estyn present. However there was little evidence of participants been unprepared to state their views. The seminars did remind me of the old joke about how if you put 10 youth workers in a room you will end up with 15 different views.

4.3 Whilst there may be some truth in all the above reasons for the diversity of points made and contradictions expressed, it seems to only emphasise the greater need for clearer answers if successful development of the YPPs is to occur, and the Youth Service play prominent roles within them. The questions given in appendix 2 still need answers but maybe more fundamental are:

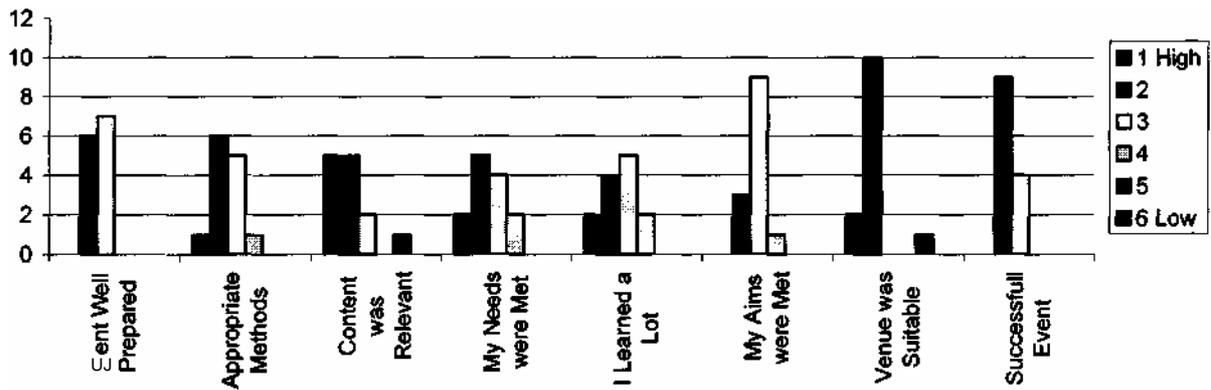
- Is the Youth Service expected to take a lead role in the YPPs by the Youth Policy Team, and if so is this for all of the 10 Entitlements?
- Is the New Labour policy agenda of social inclusion through employability the dominant one in government terms and will this influence funding either through the Welsh Assembly or outside sources for YPPs?

These questions cannot be answered without a greater involvement of face-to-face youth workers, whether these be full-time or part-time paid or unpaid. Some questions clearly are more for government but the Youth Service will be heard more if it can move closer to a common voice in answering these questions.

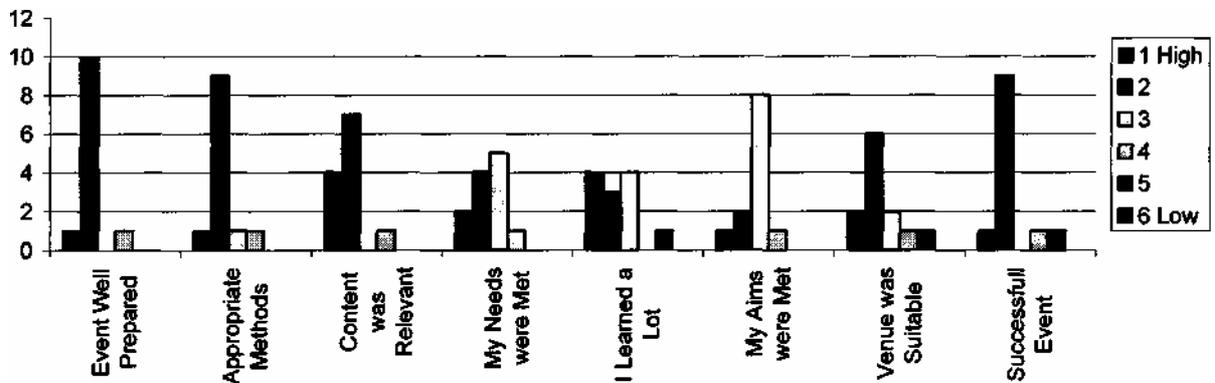
John Holmes

Wales Youth Agency
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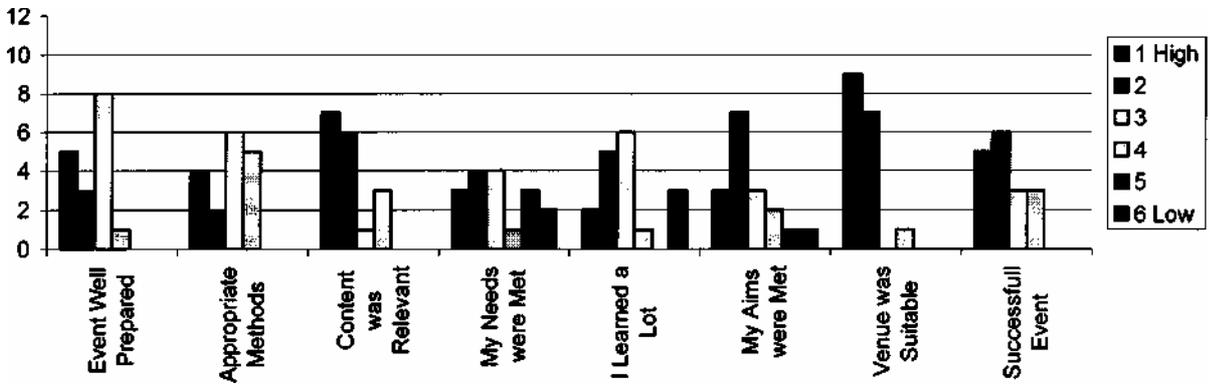
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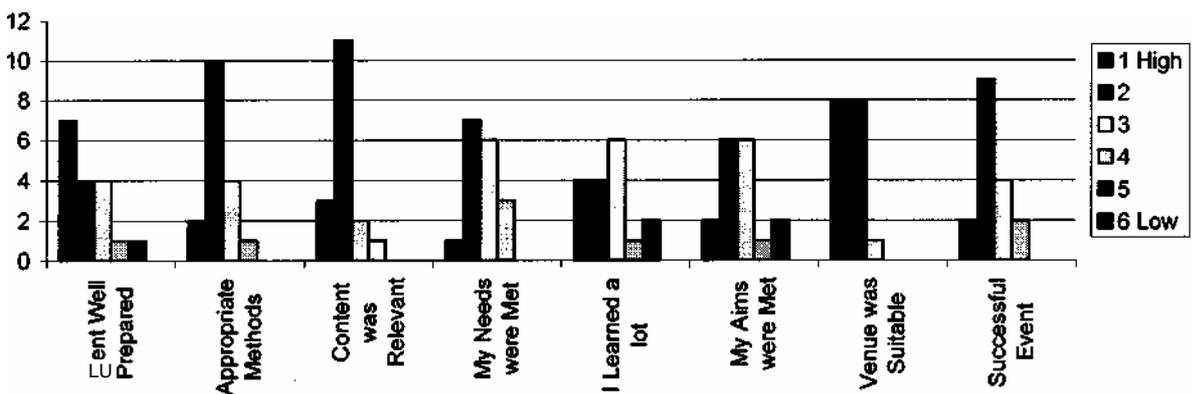
The Role of the Youth Service in
Young People's Partnerships
13 March 2003, Llandudno



**The Role of the Youth Service in
Young People's Partnerships
27 March 2003, Cardiff**



**The Role of the Youth Service in
Young People's Partnerships Seminar
8 April 2003, Cardiff**



YOUTH SERVICE AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIPS (YPPs)

Possible questions for small group discussions:

1. Is your Youth Service/Agency involved in 'social inclusion' work?
If so, what model of social inclusion most closely reflects this work?
2. Is there increasing emphasis in your work on 'employability' and does this create problems for youth work?
3. Is the Youth Service recognised in your local YPP as a 'separate, distinct' service?
4. How much is the entitlement ethos of youth work seen as the main contribution of the Youth Service in YPPs?
5. Can you identify youth work with some of the 10 entitlements more than others? If so, which are clearly youth work and which are more problematic?
6. To what extent has 'learning' in Youth Service context moved beyond 'social and personal development' to 'skills growth'? Should it make this move?
7. Can you identify local activities/projects that might fit into all 3 of the 3 levels of involvement?
8. In response to young people identifying 'basic skills' needs what should the main Youth Service response be:

Support learning through existing Youth Service activities/projects Refer the young person on to formal education agencies Develop individualised learning plans, take on learning coaches/mentors role within Youth Service contexts.

Every young person in Wales has a basic entitlement to:

1. Education, training and work experience - tailored to their needs;
2. Basic skills which open doors to a full life and promote social inclusion;
3. A wide and varied range of opportunities to participate in volunteering and active citizenship;
4. High quality, responsive, and accessible services and facilities;
5. Independent, specialist careers advice and guidance and student support and counselling services;
6. Personal support and advice — where and when needed and in appropriate formats - with clear ground rules on confidentiality;
7. Advice on health, housing benefits and other issues provided in accessible and welcoming settings;
8. Recreational and social opportunities in a safe and accessible environment;
9. Sporting, artistic, musical and outdoor experiences to develop talents; broaden horizons and promote rounded perspectives including both national and international contexts;
10. The right to be consulted, to participate in decision-making, and to be heard, on all matters which concern them or have an impact on their lives

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Note

This paper has been written from within the Wales Youth Agency from our understanding of the principles of youth work, of the nature of the Youth Service in Wales, and our analysis of the intended role of Young People's Partnerships (from Extending Entitlement). It is not based on an analysis of practice within the emerging YPPs but it is hoped that this can inform a debate at a later stage, drawing in particular on the work of the Youth Policy Unit at the Welsh Assembly Government.

1. The origins of Young People's Partnerships in Extending Entitlement

The proposal to set up the 22 Young People's Partnerships (in each local authority) came from the original Extending Entitlement Report (September 2000) and proposed three key elements (paragraph 10.8.2)

- Chief Executive office of local authority
- Local Authority Youth Service
- Voluntary Sector, Careers Service, Schools, Colleges, Training providers, Probation, Employment Service and Health Authority

The role of the YPPs was one of reviewing existing provision for young people in the area in the context of levels of achievement, participation, offending (10.8.3) etc. Following this review the YPP had the role to identify and resolve gaps and duplication and ensure that the 'ethos' of services should reflect the 'entitlement' approach.

By the time the more detailed guidance was published (NASW, November 2001) the potential contributors to the YPPs had grown to 30 plus in each local authority (annex 2), with community education, leisure, community safety, economic development, community development, transport, Job Centre Plus, Housing. Rather surprisingly the local authority Youth Service was not guaranteed representation in that only 3 of the local authority corporate managers responsible for Youth Service, Education, Social Services, Housing were to be included. However a representative of CWVYS (along with 4 others from the voluntary sector) were guaranteed representation. In this position paper the term 'Youth Service' refers to both the local authority and voluntary sector. It is acknowledged that there is considerable diversity within this broad definition, including almost certainly in the approach to YPPs, but it is felt to be important to work towards a common position for Youth Service involvement in YPPs. In the Draft Direction and Guidance document considerable more detail was given on the intended role of YPPs (paragraphs 11-52) and a tight timetable was suggested, with the initial strategy proposals to come into effect and start implementation by September 2002 (Annex 3).

2. The Policy Framework of Extending Entitlement

The original Extending Entitlement Report (NASW 2000) followed, and recognised the importance of other key documents relating to New Labour's position on young people. Of greatest importance seemed to be the Social Exclusion Unit's report PAT 12 on young people (SEU, March 2000) and 'Bridging the Gap' (SEU, July 1999) report on 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment. Thus the social inclusion agenda, which will be discussed more below, is central to both YPPs in Wales and the Connexions service in England. Equally the importance of partnership was common to both these developments. However, it is important to note the different emphases of the policies emerging in Wales, compared to England.

2.1 Entitlement

The emphasis on 'entitlements' in Wales is more a 'human rights' perspective and this leads to proposals for changes in the institutions that fail sufficiently to provide opportunities or entitlements to young people. This clearly fits with the youth work emphasis on empowerment

and equal opportunities but also led to a recognition that Youth Services, alongside other services to young people, were failing to deliver the 'entitlement' that young people should expect (paragraph 6.13). The reduction in core funding to local authority Youth Services (paragraph 6.10) was seen as one reason for this, as was the shortage of qualified youth workers (paragraph 6.16).

The emphasis on 'entitlements' can be compared to the emphasis in Connexions, which whilst also stressing equal opportunities, clearly had an emphasis on targeting those perceived to be most in need of support in transitions to adulthood. It can be argued that Connexions sometimes fell into what youth work would see as the trap of characterising young people in terms of their problem (of low educational achievement, offending behaviour, teenage parents, drug misuse etc). Thus Extending Entitlement looked more positively at the rights and achievements of young people.

2.2 Social Inclusion

The setting up of the Social Exclusion Unit in 1997 in the Cabinet office signalled the importance of social exclusion in New Labour Government policy. Given the historical emphasis in youth work on social inclusion (albeit using different language) it is initially surprising that it took 3 years to develop a role for youth work, despite the promotion of other forms of education during the 1997-2000 period. The origins of youth work are diverse but most youth workers identify with the role of enabling successful transitions to adulthood, and much of the 'social rescue' tradition in youth work (see Davies B, 1999), originating in the nineteenth century, recognised the risks young people faced in terms of poverty, unemployment, exploitative employment, breakdown of family ties and the lures of commercial leisure provision. Often the value of youth work in the nineteenth century (and continuing to the present day) was stated in moral, usually Christian terms, which had a duty to ensure that young people were not 'lost' by the threats that come with industrialisation.

There is an alternative tradition in youth work which has argued that the threats faced by young people can only be overcome by fundamentally challenging the society of which they are a part, and that inequalities, poverty and lack of opportunities can only be overcome by challenges rather than inclusion. The purpose of youth work, as agreed by practitioners (but not the government) at the Ministerial Conference in 1992, to develop a youth work curriculum stated

'..... to redress all forms of inequality, to ensure equality of opportunity for all young people to fulfil their potential as empowered individuals and members of groups and communities.....'

This suggests the need for a radical re-structuring of society. Only then did the agreed purpose move onto the more conventional 'support young people during the transition to adulthood'.

However, this form of radical youth work has always been in a minority, and some would argue aspirational rather than real (Williamson. H. 1997, p 156) and it was argued at the time of the Ministerial Conference was more relevant to multi-cultural urban contexts than Welsh traditions, (Williamson. H. 1997, p 158). It can be argued that this led to the difference in the purposes in Welsh Curriculum Statement (most recent edition 2002) which whilst starting with 'promote and actively encourage equality of opportunity...' leaves out any reference to redressing all forms of 'inequality', includes 'transition to adulthood' and significantly adds 'expressive' as a pillar of

youth work with reference to 'cultural identity, bilingualism, heritage'. This represents another form of inclusion within Welsh culture.

Within the social inclusion framework, which most youth work can work within, there are different models. There is a social democratic model (or discourse) emphasising redistribution of wealth as key to achieving social inclusion (see Levitas, R, 1998). Some youth workers have identified with this tradition in advocating such measures as lowering the age of voting to 16, arguing against the removal of benefits to 16-18 year olds, or more generally promoting the voice of young people through youth councils and forums.

A second model of social inclusion puts emphasis on moral and appropriate behaviour, and has close links to the character-building work dominant in the origins of the YMCA, the Scouts, The Guides, Boys and Girls Clubs etc. It is argued that this moral tradition, often emphasising 'social rescue' has increasingly been replaced in youth work by an educational framework (Davies, B, 1999 Vol 1 & 2, p2). The modern version of this approach whilst still stressing the importance of moral behaviour and responsibilities has emerged in the idea of the 'underclass' which was promoted in early New Labour (around single parents and young offenders) but appears to have been moved away in more recent pronouncements.

A third model of social inclusion, and the dominant one in New Labour thinking is based on 'social integration', which on the face of it would seem to fit well with youth work's emphasis on 'transition to adulthood'. However, in practice 'social integration' in New Labour has come to mean an emphasis on paid work and the educational/training qualifications to gain access to the labour market. This 'employability' agenda does present problems for existing traditions of youth work.

Whilst responding to issues raised in conversation by young people about 'employability' may only present problems relating to the level of workers' knowledge, it can cause greater problems if youth work is expected to reinforce the prescriptive world of schooling and training. If youth workers are expected to reinforce compulsory attendance, pre-determined curricula, and increasing monitoring and surveillance of young people who do not conform to this model of transition (by being involved in monitoring truancy, illicit sexual behaviour, drug misuse, criminal activity etc) then it is unclear if this is still youth work.

It is true that many youth workers and Youth Services have been pushed by insufficient core funding over a number of years to existing by project/issue based work targeted precisely at these problems. However it should not be underestimated by policy makers nor by other services to young people the dilemmas that these approaches raise for youth work. Leading commentators such as Tony Jeffs and Mark Smith have argued that the very term 'youth work' is no longer valuable (Jeffs and Smith, 1999) because the term 'youth' has come increasingly to have negative, problem-based connotations (with drugs, crime, homelessness, family problems, unemployment, soccer hooliganism all primarily seen as youth problems even though they are clearly generic), and even the 'transition' approach sets up adulthood as the positive to the negative state of youth. Jeffs and Smith argue that the voluntary relationship (for young people to initiate and terminate any association with a youth worker) and the educational purpose of the work are at risk. They argue for the replacement of 'youth work' by informal education in order to reclaim and extend the person-centred, voluntary and positive educational tradition of the work.

At the Wales Youth Agency we believe that the existing youth work tradition in Wales should be maintained and that there is no need to replace it with 'informal education'. Whilst recognising the importance of the informal educational approach we also recognise the value of youth work undertaken in the broad tradition of social rescue (or risk limitation, or harm minimisation) and that some targeting of young people has long occurred within youth work. In terms of the transition to adulthood we still see this as a valuable framework, and that most young people do want to move to adult status. Although recent research by the Industrial Society indicates that most young people want a fairly conventional lifestyle (in terms of work, education, social relationships) we do recognise that transition to adulthood does not mean young people want to simply be like their elders.

It is critical if youth work is continued to be valued by young people, and youth workers are to have clarity about their role, that youth work continues to struggle with boundaries, and does not fragment into an amorphous and unclear 'work with young people'. Youth work must remain in starting with broadening opportunities for young people, celebrating lifestyles and achievements despite being concerned with difficult, risky transitions. It must remain open to exploring youth sub-cultures that challenge adult expectations of conventional lifestyles. It must be remembered that the emerging and changing identities of young people as young people, or in taking on adult roles, are considerably broader than the 'social integrationist' model based on employability. Whereas most young people are keen to get a good job, youth work is still primarily defined around that social space where young people can be themselves **apart from** the pressures of adult defined institutions such as school and work. This is recognised in Extending Entitlement most notably in Annex 3 reporting the results of the focus groups in which both the diversity of responses were noted (particularly between 'engaged' and 'disengaged' young people), and the dominant theme of 'lack of facilities for young people and their desire to have a place which they can control and they can meet without undue interference' (Annex 3 paragraph 3).

This would suggest that even those who were 'engaged' in terms of school achievement wanted this additional social space and had this in common with those seen as 'disengaged', who started with a more critical view of school, training and the relevance of the 'employability' agenda.

2.3 Partnership Working

Just as important in Extending Entitlement as the theme of social inclusion is that of partnership working. The Wales Youth Agency made this theme central to their response to the Draft Guidance (January 2002), and job descriptions relating to servicing officers of YPPs stress the role of developing partnerships, and 'eliminating unnecessary duplication'. The stress on partnerships reflects the New Labour desire for 'joined-up thinking'.

The above section on social inclusion hopefully demonstrate that despite the close links to youth work there are a variety of models, some of which are more problematic for youth work. The same is true of partnership working. A comparison between Connexions and Extending Entitlement should demonstrate this. In England the Connexions service states the aim of creating a new profession of personal advisors and sees the partnerships created around Connexions as a means to achieve this. The weaknesses perceived in the range of services to young people, and in particular the Careers Service and Youth Service (reflecting the social integrationist employability agenda) led to what many in their respective services see as a 'forced

marriage' with the aim to create a new type of worker combining the strengths of each, and avoiding their respective weaknesses.

The policy is significantly different in Wales with Extending Entitlement explicitly rejecting the Connexions model (paragraph 10.5), arguing instead for 'improving the support provided by existing services and improving co-ordination'. Some ambiguity was introduced by the use of the term Youth Support Service (also used in England) but in general building better relationships between existing services is clearly seen as the best way forward. To develop this type of partnership, as was agreed in the Wales Youth Agency response, requires 'strong partners' with each partner recognised as having a distinct role by other partners **as well as** new roles emerging through partnership.

This recognition of the individual role of partners can be difficult to achieve particularly for relatively small services such as the Youth Service, compared to the 'big players' such as schools, colleges, police, health services. However, if partnership is to work it requires a commitment to diplomacy, respect, reciprocity and exchange by all partners.

To work in the YPPs to clarify **existing** roles before moving onto new roles can help to avoid unnecessary duplication. However, it is not advocated that this should occur to the extent of resulting in the allocation of one key contact person to each young person (dependent on their identified primary needs). To do this as in England with personal advisors bidding to be the key contact person for young people, could result in the removal of a key entitlement of young people i.e choice. Youth Services know that even within the limited youth work field the importance of diversity. Although sometimes leading to conflict, diversity does result in a range of services to young people. It would be far worse if a young person is allocated to a key worker only to discover that they did not relate. It could be argued that this should not occur with appropriate selection and training but youth workers know they can build relationships with some young people, whilst other workers are better with other young people, despite their professionalism and commitment (see Smith, M K, 2001).

Equally important, is the issue of information sharing. It is important that young people do not have to repeat their story to a whole range of workers or, worse still, no worker feels it is their responsibility to act and so a young person 'fall between services'. However, it is also important that information is only kept and passed on with young people's agreement, and much that is shared by young people need not be kept on file (if it was young people will become cases and the level of bureaucracy will multiply). Transition to adulthood involves a series of attempts to move in new directions, many of which young people identify as false starts. Not all these need recording and if a young person feels it is appropriate in making a fresh start to contact somebody new they should have both the choice of workers and the choice to leave 'baggage' behind. What this approach requires is a clear distinction between most young people and those deemed seriously at risk from abuse. In the latter group an identified key worker (normally from social services) responsible for making decisions about intervention clearly needs to continue.

Another issue for the Youth Service in partnership is whether youth work is perceived primarily as an ethos, as a way of intervening or as an organisation delivering services in its own right. Although the Youth Service could and did identify with the entitlement frameworks which puts the emphasis on services being responsive to young people, there was a danger that youth work was primarily being valued in terms of the ethos/process which could be applied to the delivery of other services, and it was this that would be its main contribution to the proposed youth

support service. Whilst important this would ignore its role in terms of service delivery, particularly club/centre/project work. It can also make it difficult to promote partnership based on equality in that the role of the Youth Service would be fundamentally different from other services. It would seem to be important to recognise that the Youth Service, unlike other services, has a dual role in terms of service delivery and as a process of intervention which can be applied to some other services. However partnership working will be helped if the Youth Service recognises that the ethos of youth work is only one ethos appropriate to working with young people. Whilst agreeing entirely that the youth work ethos can extend more into other services, youth work must also be modest enough to recognise the value of other types of ethos that are held by other services e.g caring, advising, counselling or even controlling behaviour which is destructive to others or young people themselves.

One argument developed by Jeffs and Smith in their proposal to replace youth work by informal education is that it over-emphasises the distinctiveness of youth as an age group, and that whilst useful for funding purposes, the issues were often common to a range of age groups. Whilst we would not go as far as this there is a danger that YPPs will reinforce a tendency towards 'the community' meaning adults and young people being seen as outside this, or even in opposition to it. Youth need to be seen as part of the community, even if a part that is challenging, and the similarities between youth work and community development recognised. Both approaches place people at their centre and encourage participation and empowerment. Placing YPPs within the broader Children and Young People's Framework runs the risk of seeing young people in terms of care and risks rather than having entitlement in their communities, and representing the future of communities.

It must be remembered that a key role of youth work has been to offer opportunities for association, for young people collectively to find their own voices and roles both with each other and in relation to adults, when their world come into contact with adults in the community. Through this process youth work reinforces community, and helps to build alongside other community activities what has been called 'social capital' (Putnam 2000). In particular 'bridging social capital' can enable young people to be outward looking and extend their boundaries (what Putnam calls a sociological WD40). In so doing it can have a major role in overcoming disaffection and alienation of young people but does this indirectly by including people in community activities, rather than targeting them as 'troubled' or 'troublesome'. Targeting young people as an age category or as disaffected young people in terms of their particular needs always runs the risk of labelling them, and reinforces negative identities. Promoting social capital through youth work may indirectly have more value in promoting employability (and thus human capital) than targeting young people directly around employability.

The strengths of youth work has always been to identify the strengths of young people, emphasise the positives of individuals, and bring them together with adults in ways that can lead to reinforcing them as members of groups or communities.

3. Principles of Youth Service involvement in Young People's Partnerships

If the above arguments are accepted relating to entitlements, social inclusion and partnership working, then it follows that there are opportunities, and threats for the Youth Service in YPPs. Some areas of work can be clearly identified as areas of strength for youth work, whereas other create problems, some which can be overcome with creativity and others cannot. It should be helpful to look more specifically at the areas of entitlement identified in the documentation. These have changed slightly from the original document (paragraph 1.8) to a fuller version (paragraph 1 in the Requirements) in the Guidance. Taking the fuller version (included as annex 1 to this paper) it seems clear that the final 3 points relating to the environment in which the work takes place are ones which youth work can fully endorse as appropriate for youth work. Youth workers should be able to contribute further examples of good practice (to those already in the Draft Guidance and Direction) of developing the voices of young people and recognising potential and actual achievement. What is less clear is whether all other services to young people, in particular those intervening as a result of negative behaviour by young people, can create this environment to the same degree.

3.1 Differing levels of involvement in Young People's Partnerships

When it comes to the 10 basic entitlements listed (see annex 1 below) it is harder for youth work to sign up with equal equanimity to all 10. They have been numbered in the annex for ease of reference but in the original document are given bullet points, although it is interesting to note the order in which they are listed. In our view Youth Services will have few problems in agreeing that they have a key role in ensuring entitlements to the latter 6-10, but for a variety of reasons nos 1-5 can present problems.

All the 10 entitlements relate to opportunities for young people's learning and clearly youth work, in being educational, values learning and has promoted a broader conception of learning. However just as terms such as social inclusion and partnership working hide different, even opposing, models, so does the term, 'learning'. The ESRC funded research into 'The Learning Society' included an analysis of the White Paper 'Learning to Succeed' (DfEE, 1999) which underpinned much of the New Labour thinking and led to the 'Learning and Skills Act' in which the new arrangements are included in legislation (differing in Wales and England). Frank Coffield (Ed, 2000) describes how it was agreed that at least 10 different models of learning are included by 'Learning to Succeed' and how these often crossover and are in conflict with each other. Without going into detail it is clear that the emphasis on

- skills growth
- personal development
- social learning
- local learning societies
- learning markets
- social control
- self evaluation
- centrality of learning
- a reformed system of education
- structural change

are all different but can all be linked to 'Learning to Succeed'. In brief it is clear that youth work fits some of these much better than others. In particular 'personal development', 'social

learning', 'local learning societies', 'a reformed system of education' and 'structural change' can be seen to be relevant to youth work as a form of informal education.

Returning to the 10 entitlements nos 8-10 are the roots of youth work and what most young people are attracted to in their involvement with the Youth Service. Nos 6 and 7 represent the growth in more recent years towards giving advice and support in setting where young people choose to be, and the ability of youth workers both to combine attractive presentation of information (eg Canllaw/Online) and partnership working involving referral when more specialised, individualised advice is required.

Although the line between entitlement 6 and 5 is not great, and youth workers may well move from 6 to 5, it is less likely that youth workers will themselves have the specialist knowledge on careers or educational courses, but still have a clear role in relation to the 'personal development' and 'social learning' aspects of these. Referral is more likely to be needed in relation to 5, and in information shop, school, college settings where youth workers exist in multi-agency teams working alongside career advisers, teachers, lecturers, counsellors, there is more opportunity for the referrals to operate smoothly.

The problematic nature of 3 and 4 are for different reasons relating to resource issues not sufficiently allowing the range of opportunities across Wales, nor the levels of quality and accessibility that all agree is necessary. This problem was recognised in the original Extending Entitlement document (paragraph 6.13).

Entitlements 1 and 2 present different problems and brings us back to the issues discussed above relating to the 'employability' agenda of the social integrationist model of social inclusion. It does appear from the documentation that it is not by accident that these are listed as 1 and 2, and that the emphasis is one of 'skills development' related to paid employment. The paragraph immediately following the listed entitlements in the Draft Guidance and Direction makes this link quite clear. Whilst the importance of both of these are not in question (and for no 2 around basic skills, a case study is given below for creative involvement of youth work) there are clear reasons for youth work not taking a lead role, and in some cases not being involved. This reflects the reasons discussed above relating to voluntary participation, the prescriptions and control mechanisms involved, and the potential for those not conforming to traditional transition routes to be seen in negative terms (despite the entitlement framework). The risk is that youth work involvement will undermine the positive relationships that youth workers normally have with young people, in particular those who are not achieving in terms of education and training.

It is suggested that 3 levels of involvement are adopted by the Youth Service in terms of YPPs.

- 1. Areas of activity that are youth work, where the Youth Service should take the lead and work in partnership with other services to young people.**
- 2. Areas of activity that are not youth work but where youth work involvement will be beneficial (either in terms of service delivery or influencing the ethos of the work) and the Youth Service exists as one of the partners, in a partnership either led by another service or where joint leadership exists.**

3. Areas of activity which are important for young people but it is not appropriate for youth work involvement given the ethos that youth work needs to adhere to and be seen to be holding to by young people.

It is appropriate that Youth Services, themselves make a decision influenced by local factors, which category different types of work fall into. Some indications of our views relating to entitlements 1 -10 are given above, although it should be stressed that it is not being said any of the 10 necessarily fall into category 3 above. It would appear that the entitlement framework itself presents similar problems for the authors of the report even though these are not fully discussed. Youth offending is discussed in the documentation (paragraphs 7.19 - 7.23 in original document), but not included in the list of issues relating to the entitlements. This reflects the good practice of emphasising the rights of all young people (including young offenders) but does beg the question of specifically how the entitlement agenda relates to young offenders. Youth workers have been involved for years in YOTs and other projects promoting positive alternations to offending, and clearly this type of work could expand in the YPPs. From our perspective such work fits category 2 above in which although not youth work, youth work involvement is beneficial. However, Youth Service managers and youth workers involved in such work will need to evaluate their role on a regular basis to ensure that it is appropriate to confirm their involvement.

3.2 Influencing Process of working of other Partners

One of the difficulties facing Youth Workers working in settings which are not youth work is that they may be unsure about what influence their work may have over a period of time. The particular projects and activities they are involved in can be assessed in terms of their relevance as youth work but another underlying aim may well be to shift the ethos of the overall partnership towards a youth work entitlement agenda. This cannot be expected to happen quickly as this involves challenging professional cultures, often from a position of being a minority, and providing evidence of success as defined by these professional or organisational cultures (e.g. increasing educational achievement, lowering offending rates, reducing drug use) is notoriously difficult to relate to the influences of the youth work approach. Again fine judgements will have to be made about the rate at which change can occur in attitudes and working practices. As suggested above (2.2) this may paradoxically be more likely to happen quickly if youth workers themselves acknowledge the value of alternative approaches deriving from other services, so that it does not appear they are arguing the youth work approach is the only one of value.

3.3 Influencing process of Young People's Partnerships

As group workers youth workers may have a lot to offer the process of the working of YPPs. As discussed in the WYA Response to the consultation on the Draft Direction and Guidance, good partnership working requires the YPP itself to work together well as a group, learning about each other's strengths before moving onto new areas of work. The sensitivities of partnership working which often lead to accusations of colonisation or marginalisation requires the development of trust and respect. This requires close attention to how the group develops, membership, attendance and overall commitment. The offer was made in the WYA response to the Draft Guidance and Direction for WYA staff to act as troubleshooters. More generally the Youth Service could have a significant role in facilitating the work of YPPs as groups, and in consultation processes with young people about their views.

4. Case Study of Potential Role of Youth Service in Basic Skills

4.1 Survey of Links between Youth Work and Basic Skills

In 2002 a small-scale survey was undertaken by the Welsh Association of Youth Clubs to try to better understand Youth Service involvement in supporting delivering basic skills in Wales to young people of 14-19 years. The survey was funded by ESF Objective 1 monies (and so covered 15 of the 22 local authority areas) and managed by the Basic Skills Agency. Youth workers gave their views via questionnaires (67 returned), 1:1 interviews (6) and focus groups (3).

4.2 Conclusions from Survey

Whilst this small survey cannot pretend to be fully representative of the Youth Service in Wales the respondents did give a clear picture of their views.

- There was strong awareness by youth workers (full and part-time) of the basic skills problems of the young people they worked with, and a clear commitment both to meeting those needs and for youth work to be more involved in basic skills (in particular literacy).
- Youth workers believed they already had both an awareness of basic skills problems and were helping to address them but both were done primarily indirectly. Youth workers primarily become aware of problems by observing and listening, and helped to address them by facilitating and encouraging activities and projects that required basic skills but took place in the wider context of encouraging personal and social development.
- The resistance to getting directly involved in basic skills work with targeted young people derives from:
 - Wanting to work with interests and problems as stated by young people, which rarely included basic skills.
 - Not wanting to embarrass young people with their peers, by identifying them as having basic skills needs.
 - Not wanting to put disaffected young people off other forms of youth work activity, by stressing basic skills.
 - Not having the knowledge or training to intervene directly.
 - Seeing basic skills as part of formal education, as primarily the role of other agencies and seeing youth work as informal education distinct from formal assessment, tuition and recording.
- The above points relating to resistance to direct involvement in basic skills applied most strongly to those involved in mainstream youth work (in particular part-time youth workers), but also applies to those in work more targeted at those disaffected from school, and those in youth work/schools partnership projects and youth access work. In those projects the preference was still for developing and accrediting young people's skills and achievements through personal and social development (alternative curriculum) rather than targeting basic skills.

- There was a fairly strong commitment from youth workers to referring on young people identified with basic skills needs to other formal education agencies, to working in partnership with those agencies but the level of knowledge of other forms of basic skills provision was limited (particularly for part-time youth workers).

4.3 Implications of Survey Conclusions

In relation to the different levels of involvement in YPPs (outlined above in 3.1) it cannot be said that basic skills is youth work nor that the Youth Service should take the lead. However, the Youth Service can have a significant role in basic skills and there is a potential yet to be fully realised in partnership working.

The major role may well continue to be identifying problems by observing and listening to young people, and working indirectly by facilitating and encouraging personal and social development, which includes some link to basic skills. This could be encouraged through staff development and training, and more creative ways identified for being more effective. In the research one youth worker reported how he had adapted the Word Power assessment approach in terms of getting young people to write to a football club and arrange a visit, which met the dual needs of providing activities sought by young people and indirectly identifying and improving basic skills. Such 'normal' youth work can also have the powerful impact of emphasising that young people can learn and achieve in areas other than formal education, and so help to counter perceptions that others have or the young people themselves have of their inability to learn.

Whilst important this 'normal' youth work is unlikely to be sufficient in meeting the basic skills problems of all the young people that youth workers are in contact with. Basic skills is likely to remain a small element within the programme and without identifying those most in need it will be difficult to effectively target. Targeted work such as detached youth work or work with young people from Pupil Referral Units can help in this respect but it is still likely that the main youth work role will be around personal and social development, encouraging learning around an alternative curriculum rather than directly addressing basic skills. Closer links with other agencies who specialise more in basic skills can help to facilitate referral and information sharing that makes partnership working meaningful but the evidence from the survey suggests it is unlikely that youth workers even in these targeted settings will emphasise basic skills. They will expect others to take on this role.

4.4 Direct Involvement of Youth Workers in Basic Skills

Whilst there is little from the research to suggest youth workers are prepared to get directly involved in basic skills, and good reasons given by them to resist this direct role, there are arguments to suggest that in some situations youth workers should think again.

What was clear from the research is that youth workers value the trust and respect they feel they can build in relationships with young people, and as a result avoid discussions and activities that could undermine this trust and respect. However, because of this trust and respect young people are prepared to discuss their hopes and fears with young people. As a result nearly 50% of youth workers gained their awareness of basic skills needs by young people directly informing them. A lower percentage (33%) were aware by directly asking young people but nearly all were prepared to ask young people 'when it seemed appropriate'.

This suggests that youth workers already are having the conversations with young people about basic skills and are in a good position to have the conversations.

What appears to be more limited is what leads from these conversations. There is limited awareness by youth workers of basic skills provisions and even if this was improved through staff development, not all young people would want to take it up. The evidence about disaffected young people suggests that truancy from school is significantly larger than school exclusion of young people (Rogers. P. in Ed. F. Factor et.al. 2001). This would suggest that returning to education in the sense of school or college is being ruled out by a significant number of young people, and even alternative curriculum projects when attended by these young people may not address basic skills needs.

A way forward may be for youth workers to improve their skills in developing 'individualised learning plans' (V. Windsor, 2002) and to be better able to respond when they or young people feel able to have the conversation around basic skills. What seems critical is that youth workers have a route to offer young people who reject returning to formal educational settings which they, rightly or wrongly, perceive to be of little value or was threatening to them. It may well be that young people do not want to address their basic skills needs, wanting to avoid what they see as difficult, painful and embarrassing. But youth workers who may find it much easier to promote alternative personal and social development may in so doing be colluding with young people's avoidance and therefore continuing exclusion.

This may require youth workers to challenge young people's perception both of themselves and of basic skills. Not only are these skills fundamental to being able to operate effectively in modern society but they can provide the key to a new awareness of self, a new sense of dignity and hope. Basic skills may be resisted if they are seen as something else to be received by institutions already seen as oppressive by young people, but if young people can see it as a way to develop their own voice, as a way of moving towards independence from dependence then it can become a force for liberation. The writings of Paulo Freire remain relevant in this understanding of literacy (Freire. P. 1970,1972).

Whilst this role of the youth worker is one as an educator rather than as a mainstream youth worker, the links to the youth work approach are clear. It will be a major challenge to develop effective individual or group programmes that both develop literacy/numeracy and link to informal educational approaches that start with the experience and perceptions of young people but it may be that in some cases the youth worker is in the best situation to do this. Limited technical skills in areas such as phonics or spelling may be less relevant than the existing trusting relationship and that young people have already realised that in youth work settings they are able to learn. Particularly in the literacy area it may be possible to continue with project/issue based work around topics such as sexism, racism, schooling, employment but directly link it to generative themes that develop use of language. In Freire's sense of 'conscientisation' this could add political development to personal and social development, which now appears to be the neglected third area in youth work practice.

5. Conclusions and Summary

The role of the Youth Service in the new Young People's Partnerships (YPPs) is recognised as one which provides opportunities and challenges. The entitlement agenda is welcomed as it fits the ethos of youth work, and the positive environment emphasising young people's capacities and achievements, included in the list of entitlements (see Annex 1 to this document), provides a basis for the expansion of both the youth work ethos and the Youth Service itself.

However, it is felt that the boundaries of Youth Service involvement need to be recognised and that some important areas of work with young people will either better be lead by other services to young people (with Youth Service being a junior partner) or will be delivered without Youth Service involvement. The following levels of involvement are offered to local Youth Services to make a decision about specific pieces of work.

1. Areas of activity that are youth work, where the Youth Service should take the lead and work in partnership with other services to young people.
2. Areas of activity that are not youth work, but where youth work involvement will be beneficial (either in terms of service delivery or influencing the ethos of the work) and the Youth Service exists as one of the partners in a partnership either led by another service or where joint leadership exists.
3. Areas of activity that are important for young people but it is not appropriate for youth work involvement given the ethos that youth work needs to adhere to, and be seen to be holding to by young people.

It is argued youth work has a strong commitment and experience in the social inclusion, partnerships and learning agendas which drive the work of the YPPs. However 'social inclusion', 'partnership working' and 'learning' have different meanings and emphases, some of these 'fitting' youth work, others raising problems.

In terms of social inclusion the 'social integrationist' model closely linked to 'employability' is not one that fits easily with youth work traditions. This is partly because young people see youth work as primarily defined around that social space where they can be themselves apart from the pressures of adult defined institutions such as school or work. It is also partly because this agenda easily leads youth workers into roles requiring monitoring and surveillance of young people. The forms of social inclusion that are better suited to youth work are those involving exploring options and extending horizons in the transition to adulthood, emphasising the moral, ethical and community dimensions of youth activity. It also includes being prepared to intervene to 'rescue' young people when they are clearly 'at risk'.

In terms of partnership the Youth Service has a long tradition of working with other services, offering a different perspective often based on the stated interests of young people. This has sometimes been a valuable check on services that are organised around a problem-based definition of young people (e.g young offenders, drug users, teenage parents etc). To continue to have this role in partnership requires a recognition of both the distinctive ethos and services provided by youth work, just as the Youth Service needs to recognise the distinctive attributes of other services to young people. If, over a period of time, the Youth Service partners feel that

their voice is not being heard in various projects then the partnership will exist in name only and the Youth Service should have the right to withdraw. The circumstances for this would be numerous and should only occur after attempts have been to repair the breakdown, but will usually involve a situation either where the Youth Service alternatives in terms of activities were not being included or where more generally the entitlement ethos is being lost.

The move in Wales towards a 'Learning Society' starting with the process of learning rather than the educational institutions is one that the Youth Service can strongly identify with. Learning rooted in everyday life, drawing on the experience of the learner, often occurring in informal situations, is what has come to define informal education. However personal and social development, local learning and challenges to formal educational systems are the root of youth work, and the emphasis on skills growth, linked to conforming to employment requirements which underpins the intended role of the YPPs, whilst an important part of learning, is not youth work.

Taking these three analyses of social inclusion, partnership, and learning together would suggest that of the 10 entitlements listed (see annex 1) nos 6-10 can, dependent on local circumstances, be provided by the Youth Service or led by the Youth Service in partnership arrangements. Nos 1-5 create more problems. No 3 could be lead by the Youth Service but requires considerable resources, as does no 4 which applies equally to all services. Nos 1, 2 and 5 are likely to require specialist skills and knowledge more likely found in schools, colleges and careers services. Clearly the Youth Service may be able to extend its existing partnership arrangements such as the 'Youth Work and Schools Partnership Programme' and so help to reduce the levels of disaffection that some young people have with schools. However the role of youth workers in schools, has long been fraught, going back to the role of youth tutors in the 1970s, and the nature of partnerships will need regular review and no doubt re-building at times. The alternative of working outside school in 'alternative curriculum' projects with those excluded or at risk with exclusion clearly has value, especially with young people who are young enough to be re-integrated back into schools.

It is in this area that the major challenge is identified to youth workers to respond creatively. In their role as youth workers they often become aware of young people struggling with or resisting learning, even to the extent of problems with literacy and numeracy. Whilst it is likely youth workers do not see learning leading to qualifications as their direct responsibility they will want to help especially if a young person asks directly for help. Increased knowledge of the role of schools, of specialist help around basic skills or careers will help and this knowledge will partly derive from partnership arrangements. However given the level of disaffection with school, reflected in truancy figures, it is unlikely that referring to schools, colleges, careers will be a realistic option in all cases. The youth worker can be faced with a dilemma if a young person has built up a relationship of trust, is strong enough to ask for help, but does not trust formal educational institutions, hi such cases even after reviewing whether the young person's resistance is in any sense justified, it may be up to the youth worker to suggest ways forward. Particularly in the area of basis skills it may be more effective for the youth worker to take on a learning mentor role, at least in the crucial stage of trying to respond to negative attitudes to learning. Such work is not seen as youth work but rather distinct work which may be necessary before moving into a partnership arrangement involving referral onto school or college.

The Youth Service will need increased resources and training if it is to be more involved in the entitlement agenda, particularly around numbers 1-5 (see annex 1). Given the dilemmas identified for the Youth Service training cannot be simply widened but will require opportunities for debate and reflection on new developments. This will need to occur both in initial and in-service training, and with youth workers on their own as well as with other professionals working with young people. The Staff College could, alongside other training providers, help facilitate this. More generally the WYA could have a key role between the Youth Policy Team driving the entitlement agenda and the local Youth Services working in YPPs delivering the expanded range of services.

John Holmes
February 2003

Annex 1-10 Entitlements

Every young person in Wales has a basic entitlement to:

1. Education, training and work experience - tailored to their needs;
2. Basic skills which open doors to a full life and promote social inclusion;
3. A wide and varied range of opportunities to participate in volunteering and active citizenship;
4. High quality, responsive, and accessible services and facilities;
5. Independent, specialist careers advice and guidance and student support and counselling services;
6. Personal support and advice - where and when needed and in appropriate formats - with clear ground rules on confidentiality;
7. Advice on health, housing benefits and other issues provided in accessible and welcoming settings;
8. Recreational and social opportunities in a safe and accessible environment;
9. Sporting, artistic, musical and outdoor experiences to develop talents; broaden horizons and promote rounded perspectives including both national and international contexts;
10. The right to be consulted, to participate in decision-making, and to be heard, on all matters which concern them or have an impact on their lives

in an environment where there is:

1. A positive focus on achievement overall and what young people have to contribute;
2. A focus on building young people's capacity to become independent, make choices, and participate in the democratic process; and
3. Celebration of young people's successes.

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