

THE WALES YOUTH WORK PARTNERSHIP - SIX MONTHS ON

Historical Background

- 1.1 The origin of the Wales Youth Work Partnership can be traced to a number of initiatives which took place from 1977 onwards. In addition to HMI short courses, these initiatives included a day conference at Llandrindod Wells in November 1978 entitled "The National Youth Bureau - Links and Services in Wales". This led to a second conference in September 1980 which considered a report "Young People in Wales - A New Perspective." and which made a proposal for the establishment of a Welsh Youth Affairs Unit/Secretariat.

More recently, the Welsh Office invited the Welsh Joint-Education Committee, the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services, the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work and the National Youth Bureau to put forward a submission suggesting ways in which a national initiative might be structured. At a Welsh Office Invitation in May 1985 the then Minister of State, Mr John Stradling Thomas MP announced that funding constraints had all of the proposals being accepted but that funds had been set aside to allow the appointment of two professional officers to cover training and staff development and to promote the dissemination of information and good practice, with administrative support.

- 1.3 The purpose of this paper is to inform those responsible for managing the various elements of the youth service in Wales about the basis on which the Partnership's work will be founded. It is accompanied by a paper entitled 'Methods and Priorities' which invites officers of LEA's and national voluntary youth organisations (NVYOs) and the staff of the School of Education at NEWIHE, Cartrefle, (which provides initial training for youth work) to engage with the Partnership in order to support the development of youth work practice in Wales.

Structure

- 2.1 The Partnership is an independent organisation which is funded by the Welsh Office for a three year rolling period reviewed annually by the Secretary of State for Wales. The conditions governing the conduct of the Partnership are set out in a Memorandum of Administrative and Financial Arrangements agreed between the Secretary of State and the Management Committee.

2.2 -The Management Committee consists of:

the Chair, appointed by the Secretary of State

two persons nominated by the Council -for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work (CETYCW)

two persons nominated by the Council -for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services <CWVYS)

two persons nominated by the National Youth Bureau (NYB)

two persons nominated by the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)

additional co-opted members

two persons nominated by the Secretary of State who act as assessors of the work of the Partnership including one member of HM Inspectorate

2.3 The Management Committee proposes to invite co-options which will provide the Partnership with views from the main interest groups involved in youth work. These are young people, youth officers, youth workers and training agencies.

2.4 Initial funding has enabled the Partnership to appoint three staff members, a Training and Development Adviser, a Field Information Officer and a Clerical and Administrative Assistant.

3 Aims and Purposes

3.1 The AIM of the Partnership is to provide an infrastructure for the co-ordination and development of youth work practice throughout the voluntary and statutory youth service in Wales.

3.2 The PURPOSES are:

to promote and provide support for social education and youth work responses to the needs and aspirations of young people throughout Wales

to establish effective co-operation between statutory, non-statutory and voluntary organisations seeking to meet those needs

to create increased opportunities for effective participation by young people building on initiatives started in International Youth Year

'Purposes continued'

to provide servicing and support for local networks through information, training and development.

to -facilitate the development of in-service training and staff development for full-time youth service staff, and part-time and voluntary youth workers throughout Wales

to publish accounts of useful and innovatory practice in addition to making available other information relevant to those working with young people

to provide a forum for discussion, decision and joint action on youth issues in Wales; to arrange, or /co-operate in the arrangement of conferences, seminars and study groups on priority issues and on specialist areas

to work with the staff of the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work, the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Service, the Welsh Joint Education Committee and the National Youth Bureau in order to improve youth work practice, policy and provision and to seek to promote the availability of their services, publications and expertise

- 3.3 In translating its purposes into methods of work, forms of delivery and criteria for evaluation, the Partnership, in consultation with youth service providers will prioritise within these eight purposes.

4 Reports of Significance to the Work of the Partnership

4.1 Youth Service Provision in Wales, Education Survey 13, HMSO 1984

Survey 13 provides extensive information and analysis about the state of youth work in Wales. Of particular relevance to the Partnership are comments concerning staff development and training which are summarised in paragraph 7.2.18

Information obtained on training opportunities and staff development arrangements raises questions about objectives and their relationship to the roles performed, about how content, emphases and sequences are determined, and how methodology is decided; about appropriate levels, frequency and progression; about recruitment and selection procedures; about the transfer of learning from courses to practice, and about tutor selection, preparation and support.

4.2 A Strategy for the In-service Training o-f those who work
•full-time in the youth service in Wales, WJEC/CETYCW 1986

The -final report o-f the WJEC/CETYCW working group on the above subject was considered at a day conference in March 1986. The working group made recommendations to youth service employers and to the Partnership. The recommendations to the Partnership were as follows:

a priority...should be to establish a national programme for the training of officers...

to establish a group charged with the development of training...

to promote a learning network of those responsible for implementing the recommendations in the report...

to promote a wider awareness of the modes of training which can be utilised in staff development and the materials that would assist (this)...

it should consider how best to produce a scheme whereby modules of accredited training could lead to a national award....

4.3 Starting from Strengths - The report of the panel to promote the continuing development of training for part-time and voluntary youth and community workers, NYB 1984

The significance of this report is that it argues for a move away from basic training courses for part-time youth workers of the 'Bessey' type towards a credit accumulation system through the construction of a 'portfolio' of training and experience. It provides an agenda for action at unit level, at authority or organisation level, at regional level and at national level, with the greatest emphasis on unit level:

It will be clear that we place great emphasis on support and training at unit level. No amount of courses can substitute for sustained support of the kind described. It is this that should form the bedrock of the Youth Services response to the learning and support needs of the part-time and voluntary worker.

4.4 Report of the feasibility study on a regional resource and development unit for North West England, NYB 1985

This study was conducted by NYB in conjunction with Manchester Polytechnic and involved extensive consultation with youth and community interests throughout the North West. Many of its findings are of relevance to the work of the Partnership in Wales. A central principle to emerge was that such a unit should be enabling and its work should be based on needs as identified by its clients

Six Months On

- 5.1 The Partnership has established office accommodation and an information and resources base in Penarth, South Glamorgan, where it shares facilities with the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services. Since the office is located in the southernmost part of Wales, particular efforts are being made to establish reciprocal arrangements for information sharing with the Social Studies document bank at NEWIHE, Cartrefle. Computers have been installed which provide compatibility with the National Youth Bureau in Leicester.
- 5.2 Initial meetings have been held with individuals and groups as part of the process of familiarising Partnership staff with youth work in Wales. Opportunities have been used to elicit the views and expectations of the Partnership held by different interest groups. Contact has been made with the officer(s) responsible for youth work within the eight local authorities in Wales; with officers of six national voluntary youth organisations; with staff at NEWIHE, Cartrefle; with some full-time and part-time youth workers in Clwyd, Gwent, Gwynedd, Powys and South Glamorgan; with young people involved in local youth councils, Youthlink Wales and Online; and with the research and information ad hoc group of the National Advisory Council for the Youth Service
- 5.3 During the visits to local authorities, information was requested concerning the provision of training for staff involved in youth work. Valuable background information has also been provided through the report of the WJEC/CETYCW working group on in-service training for those involved full-time in the youth service in Wales.
- 5.4 A questionnaire has been sent to over three hundred youth workers to establish the use currently being made of information available to them and to identify areas of unmet need. It is anticipated that responses will be collated and analysed by the end of June.

Methods and Approaches

- 6.1 Through their contacts with, youth workers and youth work managers in the LEAs and voluntary organisations the Partnership's staff have encountered a general, though not exclusive, acceptance of the need for an organisation to carry out the tasks for which the Partnership was established. Expectations of the Partnership are varied and it is intended that this paper and the paper entitled 'Methods and Priorities' will help to clarify these.
- 6.2 For an organisation with a broad, national remit, it is especially important that objectives are carefully and realistically framed and that the methods used maximise the potential for change which the establishment of the Partnership creates. Account must also be taken of the diversity of youth work practice, policy and provision which pertains in both the statutory and voluntary youth service.
- 6.3 The Partnership creates opportunities for new networks of relationships to be established within the youth service in Wales. This 'structural' contribution will take the form of working groups, fora, study groups, support networks or other groupings established to carry out specific tasks.
- 6.4 Through the work of its Training and Development Adviser, the Partnership provides the potential for work in staff development and training to be facilitated both within and across the boundaries of LEA's and voluntary youth organisations. This 'enabling' contribution may find expression through joint training initiatives, consultancy with regard to staff development policies, or professional and administrative support to groups seeking to establish new training strategies.
- 6.5 Through the work of its Field Information Officer the Partnership offers a new facility in Wales for the collection and dissemination of information and resources for youth work. This facility will include videos, teaching packs, training materials etc. A central feature of this 'resourcing' contribution will be the dissemination, inside and outside Wales, of examples of useful youth work practice.
- 6.6 The success of the Partnerships' work will be largely determined by its ability to engage collaboratively with youth work practitioners, managers and trainers in the process of implementing desired change.