

# Training - a coherent route

During the past years there have been a number of changes to youth worker training in Wales. John Rose, Assistant Director of the Wales Youth Agency, talks to Ymlaen about these new developments and the implications for the youth service in Wales.

**I**n the mid 1980V there was a wish in Wales to develop a coherent route of training which would be designed to meet organisational needs and to give part-time workers the opportunity of progressing to recognised academic and professional qualifications.

An attempt was made to achieve this in 1987 with the introduction of a Stage 2 part-time training course at the University of Wales Cardiff, involving trainers and students from the old counties of Mid and South Glamorgan and Gwent. While this training provided a quality experience, students were left isolated as the training could not be recognised either within an academic framework or by the youth & community work endorsement body. The failure of this training with regard to developments within a coherent route reinforced the importance of the need to ensure securely located training and proved to be a milestone in youth & community work thinking.

By 1990 a number of new developments highlighted the growing importance of the part-time youth worker. The

first was the *Survey of Youth Workers in Wales* which was carried out by the Wales Youth Work Partnership. This survey involved over 460 full and part-time workers and provided factual information on the changing role of the youth worker. Included in these changes was the reduction of time spent by full-time workers on face-to-face work and the resultant responsibility given to the part-time worker to deliver the youth work programme. Other developments were the core curriculum debate which was taking place at national level, and reports such as *Management Issues for the 90s*. Both were raising central

issues about the management, direction and accountability of youth and community work and introducing new terminology to the profession.

Within this scene it was clearly recognised that quality youth work would depend significantly on the part-time youth worker. It was further realised that if quality youth work was to be developed and maintained, additional support of part-time workers through training would be required, and that this training would need to carry both academic and professional recognition.

The historical divisions in training for youth and community workers are now clos-

ing. Traditionally, the training for part-time and voluntary workers has followed a path separate from that which has led to professionally qualified status. Increasingly employers and workers are asking for all forms of training to lie within nationally recognised frameworks, so that knowledge and skills become transferable currency.

## What is a coherent route?

The purpose of a coherent route is to create a system which will enable individuals to engage in a continuous and progressive programme of training throughout their career in youth and community work, and to gain awards which carry national and European recognition. This route is viable as a result of the increasing acceptability of credit accumulation within higher education.

## How will the coherent route work in practice?

In practice the coherent route will require those entering training at foundation level to enrol at the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education (NEWIHE) as Cert.H.E students, even though they will be trained locally. Training will initially be centred around two agreed modules which form part of the twelve modules contained within the Cert.H.E. (see

## THESE HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES ARE WORTH A TOTAL OF 360 C.A.T. POINTS.

Course Title	Modules	C.A.T. points
Foundation in Higher Education - Youth & Community Work	2	20
Certificate in Higher Education - Youth & Community Work (equivalent to the 1st year of a full time course)	10	100
Diploma in Higher Education - Youth & Community Work (equivalent to the 2nd year of a full time course)	12	120
B.A.(Hons) in Youth & Community Work (equivalent to the 3rd year of a full time course)	12	120

Figure 1

Figure 1). Each module is 45 hours long and carries 10 credit points. The two Foundation Course modules are made up of one 45-hour module of theory and one 45-hour module of practice and will be similar to previous part-time courses (such as the WJEC Scheme in Wales or the Stage I training for part time workers).

The remaining ten modules of the Cert.H.E. comprise seven modules of theory and three modules of practice, again each module is 45 hours long. Once the two Foundation modules have been completed, the student will be able to proceed at their own pace through the remaining modules until the required twelve are completed, at which time the student will receive a Cert.H.E. At this point a number of options are available to the student, which are:

- to remain within their

organisation as a part-time worker, with the advantage of holding a recognised academic/professional qualification which provides a theoretical underpinning to their practice;

- to use the Cert.H.E. to access a wide range of academic careers such as teaching or social work;
- to use the Cert.H.E. to obtain the Dip.H.E in Youth & Community Work which could be done through full or part-time routes. A Cert.H.E. would entitle the student to an exemption of 120 credit points from the Dip.H.E. which carries 240 credit points.

It is intended that the coherent route will offer training locally to meet need and that the training programme will be designed to allow students flexibility which will meet individual and organisational

circumstances and needs.

It is anticipated that the Foundation Course will be delivered within individual unitary authorities or through consortium arrangements. 21 of the 22 unitary authorities in Wales have already expressed their intention to be involved in the coherent route. After the Foundation level, it is anticipated that the remaining modules of the Cert.H.E. will be delivered through the development of local training bases through unitary authority consortia.

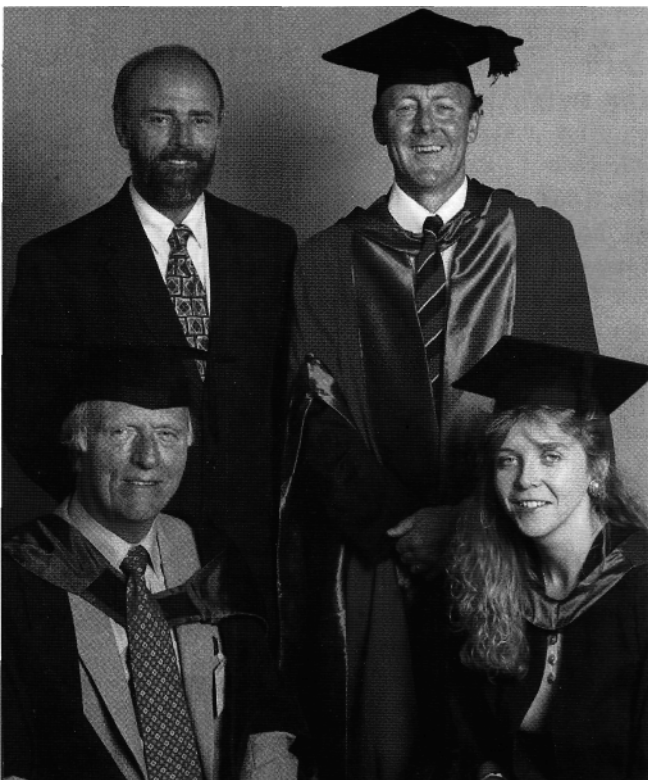
The introduction of the coherent route is a positive development in Wales. It is designed to improve the quality of practice delivery to young people as well as offering workers the opportunity of progression through the attainment of recognised qualifications.



Natasha Harries, the 150th student to complete the old Dyfed LEA Stage i Course, receives her certificate from John Ellis, then Director of Education.

#### • Further information

The coherent route is open to workers in both the statutory and voluntary sectors in Wales. Each major organisation has an officer with designated responsibility for training who should be the first point of contact for potential students. A list of training officers is available from the Wales Youth Agency (address on p.2).



Roisin McGeown, the first student at NEWIHE to be awarded a First Class Honours Degree in Youth & Community Work, with (clockwise), John Rose, Wales Youth Agency; Professor J.O. Williams, Principal; and Bert Jones, Principal Youth & Community Work Lecturer.

It is extremely important to note that a recognised qualification in youth and community work must have an academic validation carried out by a suitable Higher Education establishment such as the University of Wales. It must also have a professional endorsement from the Education and Training Standards Committee of Wales. Without either of these a qualification will not be recognised within the framework of professional qualifications.

Since 1977 the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education (NEWIHE) has been given authority by the Welsh Office to run the Initial Professional Qualification in Youth & Community Work, providing students with a Diploma of Higher Education. This initial professional qualification has, since its earliest day, been given a professional endorsement, first through the Education and Training Standards Committee of the National Youth Agency (England), and in 1995 by the new ETS Committee of the Wales Youth Agency. Academic validation during the past four years has been given by the University of Wales. In 1995 a new BA in Community Studies delivered by NEWIHE was recognised by the University of Wales.

At Dip.H.E level, the youth and community course has been modularised with each module given Credit Accumulation and Transfer Points (CATS). This move has greatly assisted the development of a coherent route by offering flexible methods of study and well defined 'landmarks' of achievement.