

## News release

21 April 2009

### **Lack of strategic planning damaging the impact of youth worker training**

Local authority training programmes for youth workers are generally good. However, according to an Estyn report published today, more effective strategic planning is needed if the benefits of better training are to feed through fully to improved services for young people. Inspectors found that there is generally poor communication between local authority youth services and the Welsh Assembly Government about strategic objectives and national priorities. This gets in the way of youth services developing good and effective workforce planning at a local and regional level across Wales.

Dr Bill Maxwell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, says, "Youth workers play an important role providing support and advice to young people in youth clubs, on the streets and in schools. The Welsh Assembly Government's national youth service strategy stresses the importance of focussing on regional collaboration and workforce development. The challenge now is for both the Assembly Government and local authority youth services to improve communication so that they effectively match the national priorities of the annual training grant with local needs."

There are many good examples of partnership working between youth service managers who are responsible for training, but practice is inconsistent. Inspectors found that where training officers from different regions work well together, this is often due to an informal long standing working relationship, rather than as the result of strategic planning. Local authority youth services need to improve the strategic planning of workforce development on a regional basis, in order to secure continued service improvement and make best use of resources.

Training which leads to qualifications for youth workers often results in a better quality and range of services available to young people. All trainees believe that they have learned a lot from their qualification training and they enjoy their courses. However, there is not enough emphasis in the training on understanding key Welsh Assembly Government policies and how they impact upon youth support services.

All youth services monitor and evaluate the quality of their training delivery through the collection of data on trainees' progress, maintenance of records and analysis of user satisfaction. However, there is still little systematic evaluation to measure the impact of training on improvements for young people and little regional sharing of such information. This means that most regions do not know very clearly where they need to focus their shared experience and resources in order to drive up the quality of outcomes for young people in their area.

## **ENDS**

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## **Notes to Editors:**

### **About the report**

Estyn's report 'How good is the training of youth support workers in Wales?' is available in full at <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/ThematicReports.asp>

The evidence base for the report draws on:

- Interviews with principal youth officers, training officers and course tutors from all 22 youth services in Wales, as well as past and current trainees from most courses.
- Extensive documentation provided by every youth service on its most recently completed and current qualification courses at level 2 and 3.

In 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government extended the scope of section 75 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. As a result, the legislation now brought the education and training of youth and community workers by higher education (HE) institutions within the remit of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training for Wales.

In the financial year 2009-2010, Estyn will undertake a further survey and report on the qualification training for youth workers provided through further education colleges and higher education institutions.

## **About Estyn**

Estyn is the Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales. Our aim is to achieve excellence for all in learning in Wales. We do this by providing an independent, high-quality inspection and advice service.

Our vision is to be recognised through the expertise of our staff as an authoritative voice on learning in Wales.

We are independent from, but funded by the Welsh Assembly Government (under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998).

For further information please visit our website [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)