

# Review of the Impact of the Youth Work Strategy Support Grant

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a review of the Welsh Government's Youth Work Strategy Support Grant. The review was undertaken by independent researcher and consultant Mark Brierley of *Mark Brierley Consulting* between late April and early June 2017.

The **Youth Work Strategy Support Grant (YWSSG)** is a four-year grant from April 2014 worth £2.756m each year.

There are three criteria for the YWSSG (the bold has been added by the reviewer for emphasis):

- a) Support the implementation of the **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF)** plan, including supporting and facilitating the contribution of the voluntary sector.
- b) Support **open access provision** to meet **local need and fill gaps** identified within the Local Authority **Single Integrated Plan**.
- c) **Up to 25%** can be spent on supporting **training needs for staffing (including the voluntary sector)**, this grant may not be used to fund generic training which should be delivered through Local Authorities such as safeguarding, health and safety and food hygiene.

### Distribution of Funding by a Grant and Strategic Impact

The view of almost every Principal Youth Officer (PYO) interviewed was that the YWSSG **should remain as a grant that is separate from the RSG**. The **WLGA's** position is that, while there is a risk of further erosion of Youth Service provision should the YWSSG be withdrawn or merged into the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), all grants should be merged into the RSG for local determination, based on local need.

Some 75% (n=15/20) of the PYOs interviewed, said that a strength of the Grant is that it is **flexible** in how it may be used. The YWSSG paperwork does not assist PYOs to demonstrate how they have used the Grant to address **change management and modernisation processes strategically**.

PYO's were often keen to stress that the Grant has enabled them to **develop, test and adjust innovative projects**, in response to locally identified needs, providing services in different ways at different times and in different locations. These were regarded as being different to, and adding value to, services provided through core funding, thus supporting creativity and modernisation.

PYO's were also able to give examples of how the Grant had **enhanced partnership working**. In particular, it had helped to develop **matched-funding, pooled funding, or helped the alignment of multiple funding streams to work collaboratively**.

### Criteria for the Grant

Over the three years of the Grant, around **56% (£4.6m)** went towards **YEPF** activities, **33% (£2.7m)** supported **Open Access provision and Single Integrated Plan** projects, and **11% (£0.94m)** went towards **Training**. The average of 11% for Training is well below the 25% maximum that was allowed under the Grant. YEPF budget increased between 2014-15 and 2016-17 in 11 Local Authorities, and Training declined in 15 Local Authorities. The distribution of budgets across the three criteria showed substantial variation between Local Authorities. It was not possible to identify how much of the training budget went towards **professional youth work training** (L2/L3 Youth Support Worker or L4-L7 Degree

level qualifications) rather to more general training.

Eleven Local Authorities funded projects that had the promotion of the **Welsh Language and/or culture** as core components, many of which were Local Authorities that prior to this had weak Welsh language provision. Over three years this amounted to around **£633k (7.7%)** of the total Grant. However, this does not include projects where Welsh would have been used as part of bilingual delivery so the figure understates the position.

Fourteen Local Authorities commissioned projects from the **voluntary sector**. This amounts to **£1.422m** funding over three years, or around **17%** of the Grant (by comparison the National Voluntary Youth Organisations [NVYO] Grant distributed around £655k of funds p.a. from 2015 onwards). This was not evenly distributed (but nor is the amount of money that Local Authorities spend with the voluntary sector from their core budget, so it is only part of that picture).

Local Authorities were not asked to identify whether their projects were expected to impact on any of the **National Well-being Indicators**. There may be some benefit, should the YWSSG continue, in asking Local Authorities to make explicit links to the National Indicators for projects where relevant. A distinction would need to be made between projects where the Indicators would be a primary focus (which should have associated output/outcome targets) and those for which the Indicator was a secondary benefit (no requirement for targets).

### Placing Decision-Making in a Wider Context

The monitoring and evaluation processes are focussed on the small picture, the impact of projects, rather than the bigger picture about strategic choices, change and population-wide impact. The variations in how Local Authorities have used the YWSSG reflect local needs, local contexts and strategic priorities.

The YWSSG is being reviewed in isolation from the bigger local picture but is actually a piece of that jigsaw. So, if the YWSSG is to continue, and assuming that some form of Sufficiency Assessments are developed, how should those two fit together?

### Outputs and Outcomes

Although Local Authorities were asked to provide information on outputs and outcomes in their Work plans, the YWSSG process **did not provide definitions of what is meant by an output or an outcome**. These terms are not defined in the Welsh Government's consultation document *National Outcomes Framework for Youth Work* (March 2016). In analysing the impact of the YWSSG, the reviewer needed to produce some working definitions to assist with this (see section 7.1).

There were several **common methodological problems** that limited the use of the data to review the impact of the YWSSG.

- often there was an absence of baselines or targets;
- data items reported on that differed from indicators set for the project;
- too much data with too little aggregation;
- reporting by quarter rather than annual totals;
- poor mix of numbers and percentages.

The methodological difficulties in tracking achievement of outputs and outcomes were reflected in the answer to the question of whether output and outcome targets were met. The absence of robust data made it more difficult to evidence achievement against targets. This does not mean that there was lack

of impact, but means there was more reliance on the qualitative text in documents and the interviews with PYOs. The absence of robust information in the monitoring and evaluation documents does not mean that Local Authorities are not collecting it. It means that it is not being reported in a consistent manner to enable it to be used meaningfully at national level; this makes this a problem that can be solved.

Nevertheless, despite probable under-reporting of data, it was possible to aggregate some data relating to:

- How many young people were engaged with (section 7.3.2);
- How many young people were worked with directly (7.3.3);
- Number of professional youth work qualifications supported (7.3.5);
- Accreditations (7.3.8);
- ETE progress (7.3.9).

Some noteworthy data includes:

- A fall of 33% from 2014-15 to 2015-16 of staff supported on youth work professional qualifications;
- Around 23% of all youth work accreditations in 2015-16 being linked to the Grant (n=5277/22719);

It is clear from the feedback from PYOs that they believe that the YWSSG has had a major impact on the YEPF agenda. Young people who are at risk of becoming NEET or who are NEET are likely to be difficult to engage through formal school settings and it is probable that the application of youth work methods has contributed to the sustained nationwide reduction in young people who are NEET. In addition the YWSSG has helped to build partnerships and pathways with schools in particular, and PYOs believe that it has helped to reduce the percentage of young people who are NEET. This is not borne up strongly in the data because of deficits in the data.

### Summary of Findings

The PYOs interviewed were unanimous in wanting the **YWSSG to continue as it is, with the same or increased levels of funding**. The **WLGA's** position is that all grants should be merged into the RSG for local determination, based on local need. PYOs felt that the three criteria were helpful. If the YWSSG were to continue, it would need to be aligned to any new Youth Work Strategy and the review of Extending Entitlement, but overall they wanted minimal change.

In terms of overall impact:

A: Youth Engagement and Progression Framework	It has supported the roll-out of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. The YEPF agenda also features strongly in feedback from the PYOs on areas in which the Grant has had its greatest impact.
B: Open access and Single Integrated Plans	It has supported Open Access provision, but often in a different model to the past (more outreach than building-based provision, more outsourcing to the voluntary sector, or innovative projects responding to emergent needs).
C: Training	Training has declined over each of the years of the Grant and is now well below the level of funding that was previously provided by the Welsh Government via the Youth Work Training and Development Grant.

The YWSSG monitoring and evaluation documentation that Local Authorities are required to complete do not ask Local Authorities to demonstrate the **needs analysis underpinning their choices** of

projects nor the **strategic impact of the Grant**. Interviews with the PYOs were more insightful than the YWSSG documentation in drawing out messages about the impact of the Grant in supporting change/modernisation, refocussing, responding to emergent needs, innovation/creativity, enhancing partnership working, and the alignment of multiple funding streams.

Overall PYOs view the Grant as being **immensely valuable to their ability to provide effective youth services in line with, and going beyond, the Youth Work Strategy**.

Should the YWSSG continue there needs to be **adjustment to monitoring and evaluation arrangements** (see section 8.4) in order to increase scrutiny, accountability and understanding of the impact of the Grant (address the data deficits and enhance monitoring; incorporate more strategic context; increase reporting on local spending; simplify the Six-Month Progress Report).

### Recommendations

Despite some data deficits, it is possible to say that if the Grant was discontinued, and even if it was merged into the RSG, it would have a substantial impact on the volume and diversity of youth service provision; on the ability of Local Authority youth services to adapt, change and modernise; and on the progression of the YEPF agenda. My recommendations are:

REC1:	Should the YWSSG continue it would need to be adjusted to fit with strategic priorities emergent from a revised Youth Work Strategy and/or review of Extending Entitlement.
REC2:	Work plans for the YWSSG needs to include commentary on needs analysis and who was involved in that (e.g. young people, staff, partner agencies) and reasons for making strategic choices on how to spend the Grant.
REC3:	<p>The criteria and/or reporting might be usefully revised to enhance accountability while retaining flexibility by reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the Grant has had a local strategic impact (change management/modernisation/refocussing; response to new emergent local needs; enhancements to partnership working; alignment of multiple funding streams); and an explanation of the factors that are driving these changes.</li> <li>• Developing projects that are innovative/creative;</li> <li>• Enhancing linkage to National Indicators for Well-being;</li> <li>• Separating professional youth work training from the more general training element of the grant.</li> </ul>
REC4:	The YWSSG need to be placed in a wider strategic context as it only shows part of the picture of local provision. A fuller review of all local services, including the role of the YWSSG, should be addressed via the Sufficiency Assessments that have been proposed in other reports and reviews.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This report provides a review of the Welsh Government's Youth Work Strategy Support Grant. The review was undertaken by independent researcher and consultant Mark Brierley of *Mark Brierley Consulting* between late April and early June 2017.

The Welsh Government is required to review funding programmes at least every 3 to 5 years. The aim for this review was:

To develop a clear understanding of the value and impact the Youth Work Strategy Support Grant is having on the delivery of youth work provision across Wales and to make recommendations for potential future funding. The findings and supporting recommendations from this research and other grant evaluations will provide the Welsh Government with evidence to inform thinking for future youth work funding.

The Welsh Government's *National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018* defined four key outcomes:

1. Ensuring that young people across Wales can continue to have access to diverse informal and non-formal learning opportunities, opportunities that stretch their horizons and help them grow in confidence.
2. Strengthening the relationship between youth work organisations in Wales and formal education on both a local and national basis. Including youth workers playing more of a formal role in supporting young people who are most at risk of disengaging with education and training – an integral part of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.
3. A better co-ordinated and more consistent youth work offer to young people, with youth work organisations in the statutory and voluntary sector working together more effectively.
4. The ability to demonstrate the impact and outcomes of youth work. A National Outcomes Framework will be developed specifically for this purpose.

*Taken from the Invitation to Tender for this review.*

The **Youth Work Strategy Support Grant (YWSSG)** is a four-year grant from April 2014 worth £2.756m each year. Each of the 22 Local Authorities in Wales received a base allocation of £0.025m then a composite share based on the formula used to support the **Revenue Support Grant (RSG)**.

Prior to the YWSSG, there had been various other grants relevant to Youth Work, including a **Youth Work Revenue Grant**, a **Youth Work Training and Development Grant** and a **Youth Work Capital Grant**. The Capital Grant was merged into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools fund (managed outside the Youth Work Branch) while the Revenue Grant and Training Grant were merged and renamed the Youth Work Strategy Support Grant.

In parallel to the YWSSG, another grant was made available to Local Authorities to support the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, aimed at providing funding for a local Engagement and Progression Co-ordinators. The total **YEPF Grant** in 2016-17 was **£1.1m**. To simplify administrative arrangements within the Welsh Government, this has been merged with the YWSSG for 2017-18.

There are three criteria for the YWSSG (the bold has been added by the reviewer for emphasis):

- A: Support the implementation of the **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** plan, including supporting and facilitating the contribution of the voluntary sector.
- B: Support **open access provision** to meet **local need and fill gaps** identified within the Local Authority **Single Integrated Plan**.
- C: **Up to 25%** can be spent on supporting **training needs for staffing (including the voluntary sector)**, this grant may not be used to fund generic training which should be delivered through Local Authorities such as safeguarding, health and safety and food hygiene.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The review was required to be completed by the Welsh Government over a short timescale (two months), drawing on existing information and interviews with PYOs. The focus was on looking at the impact of the Grant, not on the effectiveness of Local Authority youth work departments overall, nor on youth work practice, with the intention of providing information that would assist the Minister in making decisions over the future of the Grant. The nature and timescale of the review influenced the choice of methods employed.

With regards to existing information, for every year of the YWSSG each Local Authority was required to produce:

- an **annual Work plan** specifying:
  - the projects that the Grant would be used to support;
  - how much money was allocated to those projects;
  - which of the three criteria the projects met;
  - outputs and outcomes for each project.
- The Welsh Government then sent a **Grant Offer Letter (GOL)**, to be signed by the Local Authority, confirming:
  - the total sum awarded;
  - a list of contract terms;
  - Schedule 1: confirming allocation of funding to each of the projects;
  - Schedule 2: specifying the targets to be met for each project.
  - both Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 tended to reflect verbatim the information supplied by the Local Authority in their Work plans.
- Local Authorities were required to provide a **Six-Month Monitoring Progress Report and Annual Evaluation Reports**.

Two core methodologies were therefore employed to meet the tender brief:

- **Content analysis** of the Work plans, GOLs and Monitoring/Annual Evaluation Reports from the start of the Grant in 2014-15 to the 2016-17 Six-Month Monitoring Progress Report (the 2016-17 end of year Evaluation not being completed at that point).

- **Interviews.** All 22 Local Authorities were approached and interviews were completed with senior representatives from 20 of them. Feedback was also received from the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS), the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and five voluntary sector organisations (unsuccessful attempts were made to contact several others). Appendix 1 lists the interviewees.

### 3 DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING VIA A GRANT

#### 3.1 Grant vs RSG Core Funding

The **WLGA's position** is that, while there is a risk of further erosion of Youth Service provision should the YWSSG be withdrawn or merged into the RSG, all grants should be merged into the RSG for local determination, based on local need.

The view of almost every Principal Youth Officer (PYO) interviewed was that the YWSSG **should remain as a grant that is separate from the RSG**. This position was supported by CWVYS. There were concerns that youth services have been affected disproportionately by cuts within Local Authorities and, even in Local Authorities where the service receives a substantial proportion of its RSG allocation, it was still well below 100%. A selection of quotes, from different PYOs, is shown below:

“Can’t guarantee we would get it if it went into RSG”

“Would not feel comfortable” if it went into RSG. “I’d have to fight for it.”

“I would be very concerned” if it went into RSG.

“If it was in the RSG we wouldn’t see it.”

“It is vital that it comes as a Grant.”

“Everyone is nervous about what happens from next April.”

A couple of interviewees acknowledged that, as one put it “the advantage of incorporating it into RSG would be that the money was there every year; but the Grant protects Youth Services.” Both thought it was safer, in terms of guaranteeing youth work services, if retained as a grant.

One interviewee said that: “If it was absorbed into the RSG it would have to be ring-fenced” while another said that ““All Youth Service budgets should be ring-fenced.”

One PYO was more neutral: while sharing the above views, they also emphasised that several projects that had developed locally were in partnership with other agencies and felt that the short-term nature of a grant might inhibit the development of such projects as well as making it more difficult to retain good staff. They said that if the Grant was assured for three to four years it would create stability and that would increase its impact “whereas the stop-start nature of 12 month grants creates anxiety.”

### 3.2 Impact on Change Management and Modernisation of Services

Some 75% (n=15/20) of the PYOs, without being prompted, said that a strength of the Grant is that it is **flexible** in how it may be used. That flexibility allowed it to be customised towards local needs and circumstances as a result of the criteria for its use not being too prescribed. Youth work is located in different departments in different Local Authorities and that might influence how the Grant was used.

The YWSSG paperwork (Work plans and Annual Evaluations) does not reflect the extent to which PYOs have used the Grant to address **change management and modernisation processes strategically**. It does not ask for any commentary on how decisions were made about priorities for the Grant, nor on the impact of refocussing or restructuring. Some of the paperwork reflects this but more came out in the interviews than was communicated in the documentation.

In addition, PYOs were often keen to stress that the Grant has enabled them to **develop, test and adjust innovative projects**, in response to locally identified needs, providing services in different ways at different times and in different locations. These were regarded as being different to, and adding value to, services provided through core funding, thus supporting creativity and modernisation.

In the interviews, the PYOs were asked about how their service had changed since 2014 (impact of restructures and/or refocussing); the extent to which the YWSSG has supported the development of creative/innovative approaches; and where the Grant had had its greatest impact. Some examples of their replies are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Areas of Impact for the YWSSG

	Change Management	Areas of Greatest Impact and Project Innovation
Isle of Anglesey	YWSSG has prepared the ground for a coming restructure which will see more full-time youth workers in schools and fewer part-time workers in Open Access provision by developing close partnership working with schools. Increase of use of the Grant for training in 2016-17 to support this process.	Development of lunch-time accreditation in schools and expansion of Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) provision.
Blaenau Gwent	Grant has provided responsiveness to meet needs e.g. as emergent from biannual consultation with young people – shift towards well-being of young people, DofE activities.	Development of innovative open access provision in evenings/ weekends / holidays at new leisure centre in Ebbw Vale (responding to feedback from young people), with opportunities for young people as volunteers, partnership delivery and an impact on antisocial behaviour.  Development of Welsh Language provision with the voluntary sector.
Bridgend	Against a backdrop of substantial cuts to core budget, the YWSSG was “very useful and effective in ensuring that young people have access to provisions outside their school environment.” This	Substantial impact reported in progressing the YEPF, with lessons learnt in relation to how best to support young people's transition to their post-16 destinations via development of the

	Change Management	Areas of Greatest Impact and Project Innovation
	helped to build stronger links with the voluntary sector and encouraged the development of shared practice. A Youth Work Strategy was being developed via the Youth Support Network, with the voluntary sector involved. <i>(Taken from Annual Evaluation documents)</i>	Lead Worker role. <i>(Taken from Annual Evaluation documents)</i>
Caerphilly	<p>Helped to modernise the service, enabling it to meet objectives more quickly than would have been possible without the Grant. Would have been unable to progress the YEPF agenda effectively without the Grant.</p> <p>Development/alignment of participation: “significant impact has only been achieved by linking in with other lines of engagement.”</p>	Lead workers work with a substantial number of partners to identify and support young people in Year 11 at risk of disengagement.
Cardiff	<p>Development of a model for commissioning from the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Development of more specialist training for youth workers.</p>	<p>Development of enhanced partnership working with other agencies, particularly schools.</p> <p>Substantial development of youth mentoring: there was very little in Cardiff prior to the YWSSG and it has grown for each year of the Grant, becoming embedded in schools, with an impact on young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).</p>
Carmarthenshire	<p>Creative approaches in pooling multiple sources of funding and multi-agency approaches to break down silo working.</p> <p>Change of balance of services from areas such as mountain-biking to healthy eating to make services attractive to both females and males.</p>	Development of a lead health worker role in combination with specialist substance misuse worker from Yot.
Ceredigion	<p>Move away from area-based youth workers, with much closer working with schools: outreach workers funded by Grant have supported that process.</p> <p>Choices of service provision influenced by what young people wanted.</p>	<p>Outreach project helped to both address a needs gap and to progress the YEPF agenda by reaching young people who are NEET.</p> <p>Substantial reach of the Healthy Relationships/Lifestyles programme with a range of themed workshops, delivered across a diverse range of settings. A side effect is that “our youth clubs have</p>

	Change Management	Areas of Greatest Impact and Project Innovation
		never been so busy.”
Conwy	Analysis within the Youth Service and feedback from young people influenced choices of projects in response to emergent needs.	Innovative projects around healthy image (with a strong participative element) and digital information reported as having a positive impact.  Training for staff on managing challenging behaviours.
Denbighshire	Development of a referral system in response to local need: a stakeholder review in 2016 further emphasised the value of youth work as a step-down from specialised services.  Youth service has developed a partnership also with strategic leisure services, developing synergy between the services and increasing accreditation opportunities with the partner service.	Work with schools “started from very little” and the YEPF agenda aligned with their own thinking. Three-way funding involving Youth Service, individual schools and Education has successfully developed the model of having youth workers in schools, with an impact on the YEPF agenda, to the extent that schools approach the youth service: “we will pay for it if you will manage it.” This would have been impossible without the Grant.  Also important in establishing Welsh language provision with the Urdd.
Flintshire	Development of enhanced collaborative working with the voluntary sector through including them in decision-making and bidding processes in relation to the Grant.	Bidding process means that small voluntaries with new ideas that met the criteria could apply for funding e.g. Breathing Space, a project aimed at developing mindfulness in schools; a range of Urdd Gobaith Cymru projects; and support to young carers.  Residential camp for challenging young people that had a positive impact.
Gwynedd	Change towards targeted work focussed on young people who are NEET and related to that the development of enhanced partnership work with schools.	
Merthyr Tydfil	Third year has seen an identification via a training needs analysis of skills required, including possibilities for upskilling.	Development of targeted services linked to the YEPF agenda, helped to get the Lead Worker approach off the ground.  Development of otherwise absent Welsh language provision.
Monmouthshire	Ability to upskill staff. Supported more targeted outreach in geographic areas lacking provision. “The biggest impact has been on the ability to grow the service.”	Pioneering work around LGBT issues through awareness raising in school assemblies and very popular residentials.

	Change Management	Areas of Greatest Impact and Project Innovation
Neath Port Talbot		Youth workers funded to work in job centres, building closer ties to the Department for Work and Pensions.  Flexible use of mobile unit to provide YEPF support around issues such as employment.
Newport		Substantial orientation towards YEPF felt to have contributed to the reduction in young people who are NEET.
Pembrokeshire	Youth Service and Youth Offending Team (Yot) have merged, with youth service becoming more targeted and Yot more preventive.	Substantial orientation towards young people who are NEET post-16 felt to have had an impact with an outreach team connecting with employers.
Powys	(No interview with PYO)	(No interview with PYO)
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Development of closer collaboration with the voluntary sector, with substantial levels of the YWSSG being used to commission services from the voluntary sector.	Substantial participative developments, including youth inspections of services.
Swansea	Multiple structural changes: training via the YWSSG has underpinned and supported this by developing working practices.	Development of the YEPF agenda.  Development of targeted services including targeted outdoor activities.  Expansion of Welsh language provision.
Torfaen	Services increasingly targeted within Torfaen. Increasing work with the voluntary sector.	Substantially oriented towards YEPF. A lesson learned is that short targeted courses with at risk groups felt to be having very positive outcomes.
Vale of Glamorgan	Have moved away from building-based provision with a growth of mobile provision and DofE.	Growth of Welsh language provision in partnership with voluntary sector.
Wrexham	Closure of some buildings where footfall declined, refurbishment of others, increased emphasis on detached/outreach work, and development of a restorative team to address youth work targeting and youth justice preventive agendas.	Development of hospital youth work, in combination with ESF funding.  Development of participation mechanisms, including involving young people in making decisions about the distribution of funds to the voluntary sector from the YWSSG Small Grants project.

### 3.3 Partnership Working

The PYOs interviewed were asked about the **impact of the Grant on partnership working** and they were generally very positive about this, at both strategic and operational levels. Two areas were cited particularly often:

- Impact of the **YEPF agenda** on working with other partners, particularly **schools** (noted by 13 PYOs);
- Development of more collaborative arrangements and partnerships with the **voluntary sector** (noted by nine PYOs).

### 3.4 Matched, Pooled and Collaborative Approaches to Funding

One element of partnership working that requires specific attention is the impact on **matched-funding, pooled funding, or the alignment of multiple funding streams**.

Of the 20 PYOs who were interviewed, 19 were asked about the extent to which the YWSSG helped them to attract matched-funding from other sources or enabled them to pool budgets.

- Six Local Authority interviewees **had not used** the YWSSG to acquire matched-funding (Caerphilly, Conwy, Flintshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea and Torfaen). Two commented that the precariousness of all grants made them reluctant to do so, with one saying they had heard “horror stories” of matched-funded grants being withdrawn. This was one amongst several reasons why PYOs were keen that, if the YWSSG is to continue as a grant, it should have a minimum of three years attached to it, to stabilise such arrangements.
- Three Local Authority interviewees said that they **planned to do this** in the future (Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Neath Port Talbot).
- Ten **had used** the YWSSG to access matched or pooled funding or to align multiple funding streams:
  - **European Social Fund (ESF)** projects aimed at young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET (such as TRACS, Inspire to Achieve, Inspire to Work) had been accessed by Isle of Anglesey, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport, Pembrokeshire, and Vale of Glamorgan.
  - There had been some **pooling or alignment of funding**, typically with **Families First** and **Communities First**, in Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Pembrokeshire, Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham.

Pembrokeshire *estimated* that around £100k of YWSSG funding had helped to lever in around £200k of Families First funding and around £150k of ESF funding. Denbighshire estimated that £36k of YWSSG had helped to attract a similar figure of funding from schools and the Local Authority Education department; and there was also a similar matched-funding arrangement with Urdd Gobaith Cymru.

It **may be useful in the future** to ask Local Authorities to report on how the YWSSG has been used to

**align funding** across multiple funding streams, both in terms of the additional funds that it has helped to attract through matched-funding and the extent to which pooled or aligned budgets have helped.

Of the above matched-funded Grants, Communities First has been reduced for 2017-18 to 70% of its previous levels as a step towards being phased out, Families First is continuing, and the ESF funds will be affected by the UK's exit from the European Union.

### 3.5 Plugging Gaps Arising from Cuts

PYOs were asked how much YWSSG had been used to **alleviate the impact of cuts**. Most said that it had not been used that way, that it was used for innovation and to respond to newly identified needs.

Only three PYOs gave any examples of using the Grant to support salaries or existing Open Access provision, saying that this had only happened more recently, but they were nevertheless keen to emphasise the Grant's role in creative and innovative developments. One of these said that "it was used more creatively originally."

Feedback from CWVYS noted that where the voluntary sector was commissioned to provide services, it was often at a small fraction of the cost to Local Authorities of providing similar, while placing demands on skills, training and other infrastructure for voluntary sector organisations. So while the additional work is welcomed, the voluntary sector does feel underfunded. More is said on the voluntary sector later in this report. CWVYS were concerned about the continued downward trajectory in terms of investment and stability for youth work as a whole.

### 3.6 Summary

PYOs were very supportive of the continued distribution of funding via the YWSSG.

From a Welsh Government perspective, how important or useful might the YWSSG be in supporting and leveraging strategic change, innovation, responsiveness to emergent needs, and linking multiple funding streams? These themes came out very strongly in the interviews but are less prominent in the YWSSG evaluation documentation. Flexibility was felt by PYOs to be very essential in using the Grant to support these areas.

## 4 CRITERIA FOR THE GRANT

### 4.1 Feedback on the Criteria

The three criteria for the Grant are:

A: Support the implementation of the **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** plan, including supporting and facilitating the contribution of the voluntary sector.

B: Support **open access provision** to meet **local need and fill gaps** identified within the Local Authority **Single Integrated Plan**.

C: **Up to 25%** can be spent on supporting **training needs for staffing (including the voluntary sector)**, this grant may not be used to fund generic training which should be delivered through Local Authorities such as safeguarding, health and safety and food hygiene.

PYOs felt that the three criteria are all **helpful and appropriate**. There were some examples of PYOs who felt that either YEPF or Open Access provision was less useful to them; and some commented on the training element being squeezed by year three (more on both these points later in this section of the report) but overall the three criteria were felt to be useful.

One interviewee summed up the general mood: *“They are both specific and loose: that allows for local determination against local needs and local priorities.”*

### 4.2 How the Money was Budgeted Across the Three Criteria (All Three Years)

The Work plans for each Local Authority for each year specified how much of their allocated Grant they would spend on different projects and which of the three criteria those projects would meet. This enabled the reviewer to calculate how much of the total budget went to each of the three criteria. Where a project was said to meet two or three of the criteria, the budget was apportioned equally between the criteria: this probably overstates the funding of training as a result but it was the simplest method.

A sum of **£8.268m** was awarded for the three years 2014-15 to 2016-17 via the YWSSG. Around **56% (£4.6m)** went towards **YEPF** activities, **33% (£2.7m)** supported **Open Access provision and Single Integrated Plan** projects, and **11% (£0.94m)** went towards **Training** (see table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of YWSSG budget across the three criteria

Years	Awarded	Budget <sup>1</sup>	A: YEPF		B: OA/SIP		C: Training	
All years	£8,268,001.00	£8,262,787.39	£4,611,649.92	56%	£2,713,056.84	33%	£938,080.61	11%
2014-15	£2,756,000.00	£2,753,822.39	£1,384,854.88	50%	£966,841.88	35%	£402,125.63	15%
2015-16	£2,756,000.00	£2,755,969.00	£1,604,658.01	58%	£842,661.01	31%	£308,649.98	11%
2016-17	£2,756,001.00	£2,752,996.00	£1,622,137.04	59%	£903,553.96	33%	£227,305.00	8%

It was possible to look at the YEPF projects to consider whether their main focus was on young people at risk of becoming NEET or young people who were already NEET. Over the three years around **49%**

<sup>1</sup> As specified in Local Authority YWSSG Work Plans. Sometimes these were lower than their awarded sum.

of the total YWSSG budget (£4.043m) was directed towards young people at **risk of becoming NEET** and around **31%** (£2.575m) towards young people who are **NEET**. Note that many projects addressed both of these elements so the figures overlap.

The **average of 11% for Training is well below the 25% maximum** that was allowed under the Grant. Between 2002 and 2011 the financial resources available from Welsh Government via the Youth Work Training and Development Grant decreased from £1,217,000 to £491,000: by 2016-17 Local Authorities were only allocating £227,305 of their YWSSG budget to training (the maximum allowable of 25% would in that same year have equated to £689,000).

Figure 1 shows how the **pattern of spending across the three criteria changes over the years**. YEPF funding goes up substantially in 2015-16, while Training declines throughout.

**Figure 1: Budget according to the three criteria across the three years of the Grant**

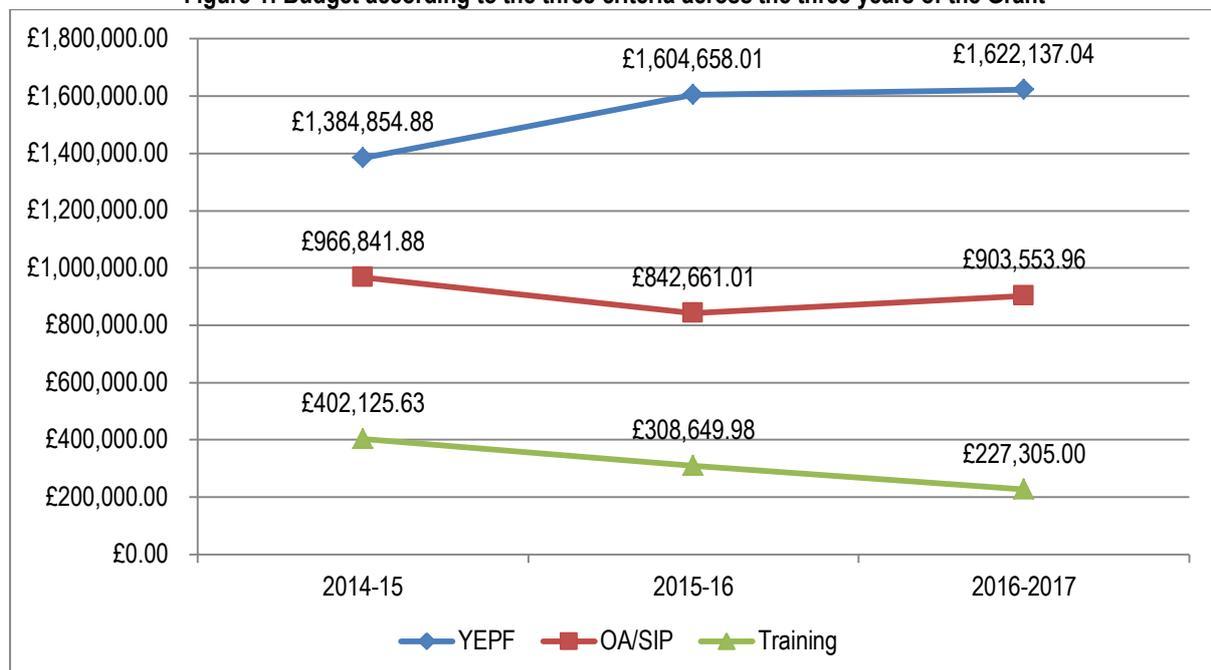


Table 3 indicates how **patterns of budget distribution changed across the three years within individual Local Authorities**. So for YEPF the budget increased between 2014-15 and 2016-17 in 11 Local Authorities, and the budget for training declined in 15 Local Authorities. In the three Local Authorities where training rose across the three years this was to support restructuring.

**Table 3: YWSSG across the three criteria x how spending patterns changed**

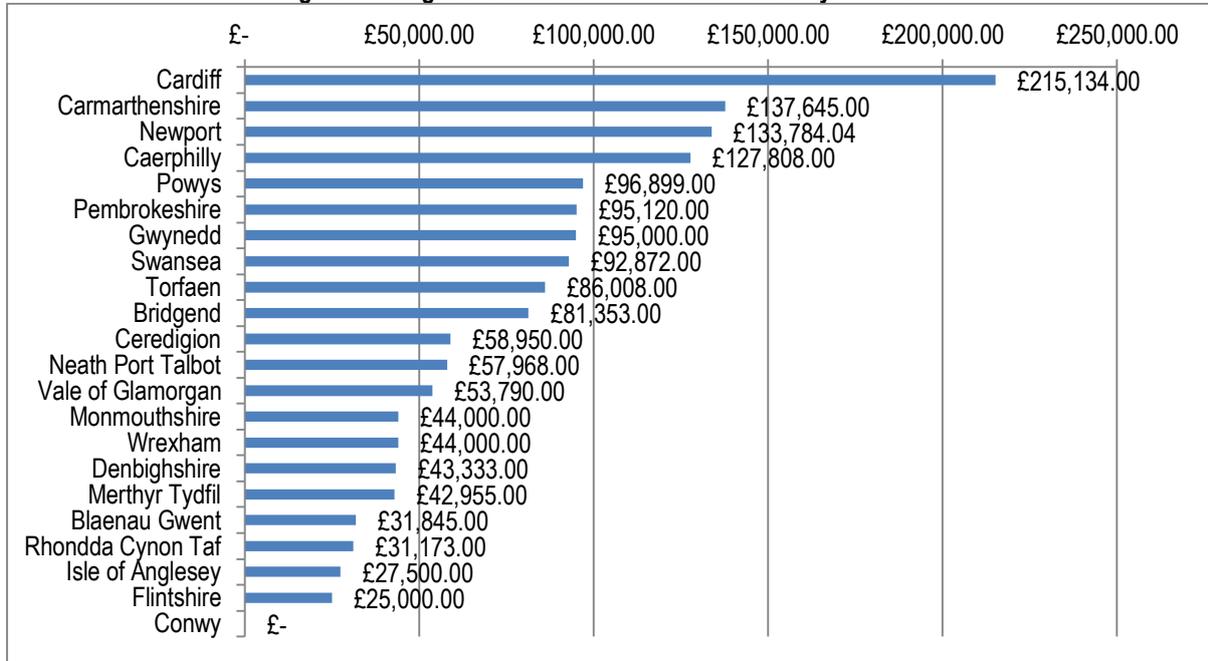
	A: YEPF	B: OA/SIP	C: Training
Budget increased	11	5	3
Budget static	7	7	4
Budget decreased	3	9	15
No budget towards this criteria	1	1	0

### 4.3 Budget by the Three Criteria in 2016-17 (Year 3) by Local Authority

#### 4.3.1 Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Budget 2016-17

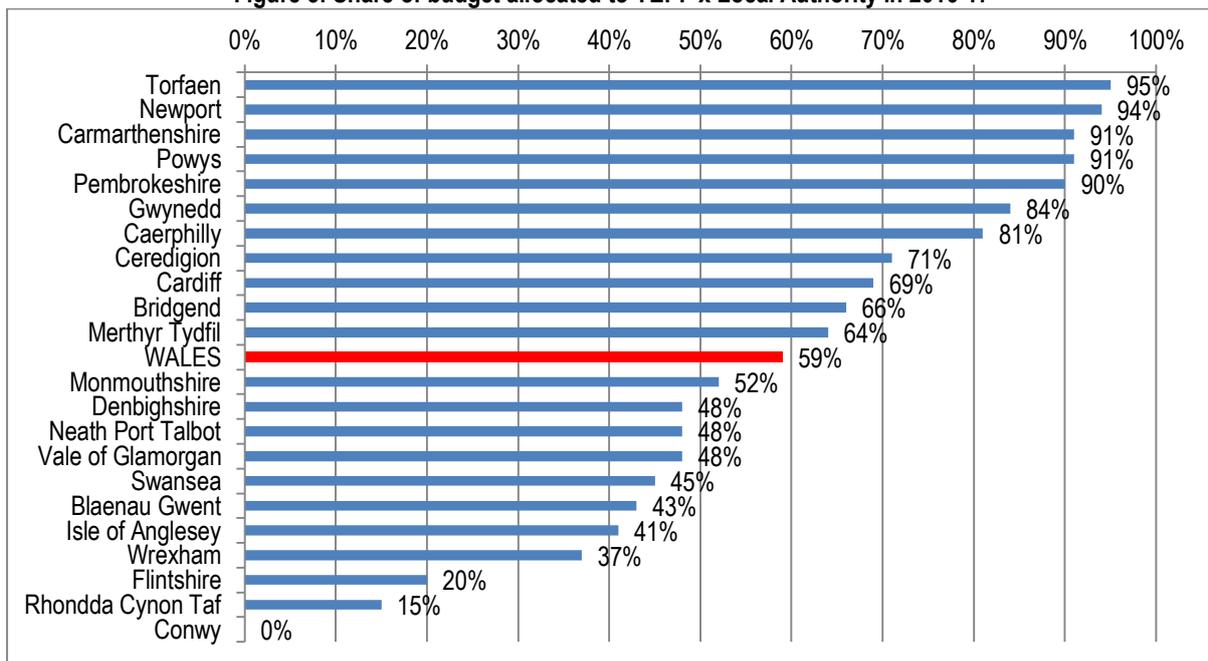
Figure 2 shows how much of the YWSSG was allocated to YEPF by Local Authority in 2016-17.

Figure 2: Budget allocated to YEPF x Local Authority in 2016-17



Given the different sizes of budget available to each Local Authority, it is useful to look at how much of their budget each directed towards YEPF (figure 3). There will be very good reasons why some Local Authorities spent a high proportion of their YWSSG budget on this criteria and some very little, but the absence of a requirement to include information on needs analysis and/or strategic choices means that the YWSSG documentation rarely provided this insight.

Figure 3: Share of budget allocated to YEPF x Local Authority in 2016-17



### 4.3.2 Open Access/Single Integrated Plan Budget 2016-17

Figure 4 shows how much of the YWSSG was allocated to Open Access/SIP by Local Authority in 2016-17.

**Figure 4: Budget allocated to Open Access/SIP x Local Authority in 2016-17**

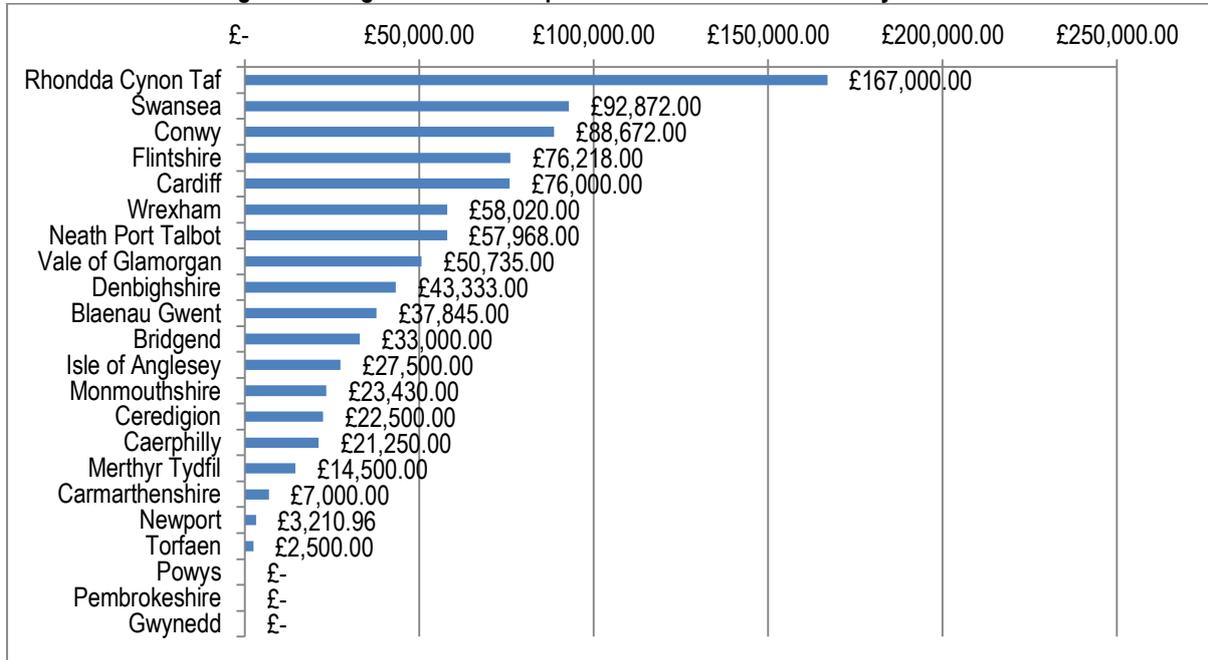
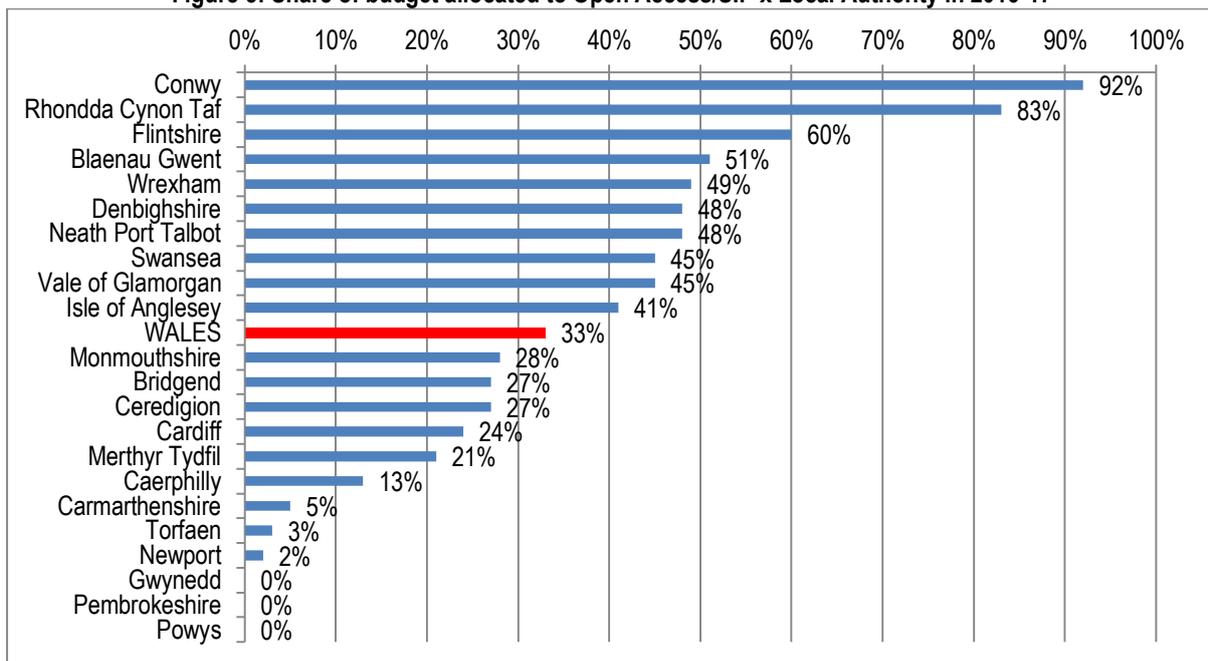


Figure 5 shows how much of their YWSSG budget the Local Authorities directed towards Open Access/SIP provision. Again, absence of information on needs analysis and strategic choices means that the reason why this is high or low in different Local Authorities is not demonstrated in the YWSSG paperwork. For example, this will be influenced by perceived adequacy of existing Open Access provision and/or local strategies to restructure/refocus that provision. It demonstrates how different Local Authorities placed different emphasis on Criteria A (YEPF) and Criteria B (Open Access/SIP).

**Figure 5: Share of budget allocated to Open Access/SIP x Local Authority in 2016-17**



### 4.3.3 Training Budget 2016-17

Figure 6 shows how much of the YWSSG was allocated to Training by Local Authority in 2016-17. Note that this focusses *only* on budget towards training from the Grant and Local Authorities may have supported training from other funds. If anything, training may be slightly exaggerated: if a project was said to meet all three criteria the budget for it was distributed equally between those criteria and that probably inflates some Training figures.

Figure 6: Budget allocated to Training x Local Authority in 2016-17

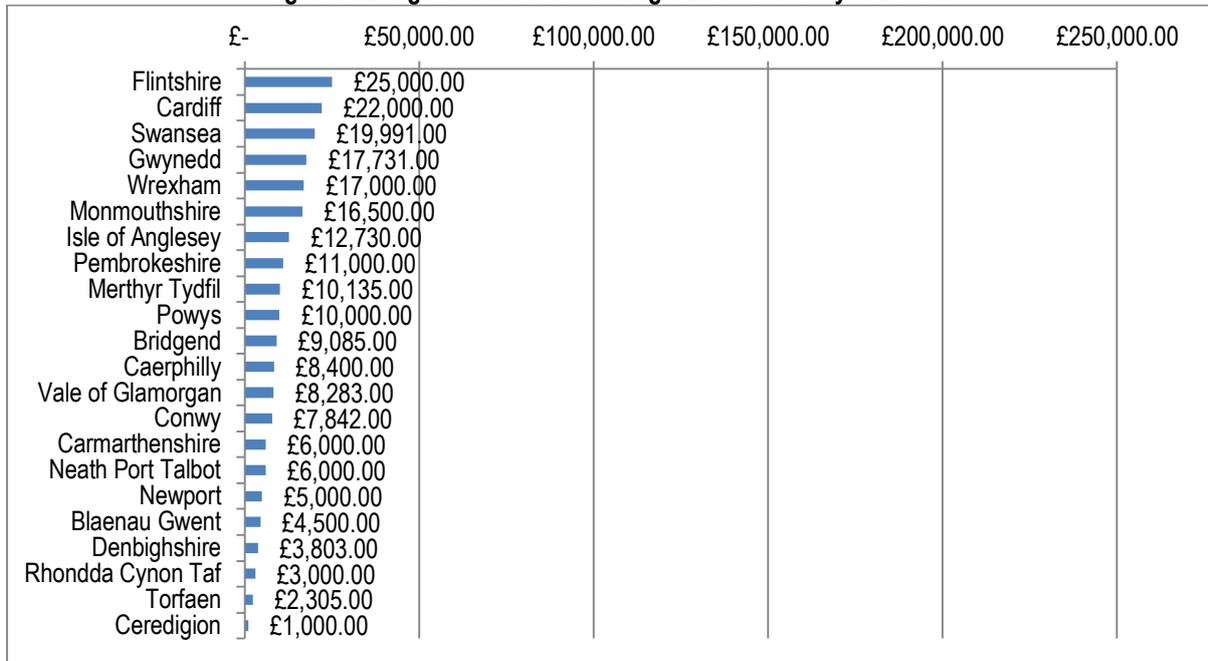
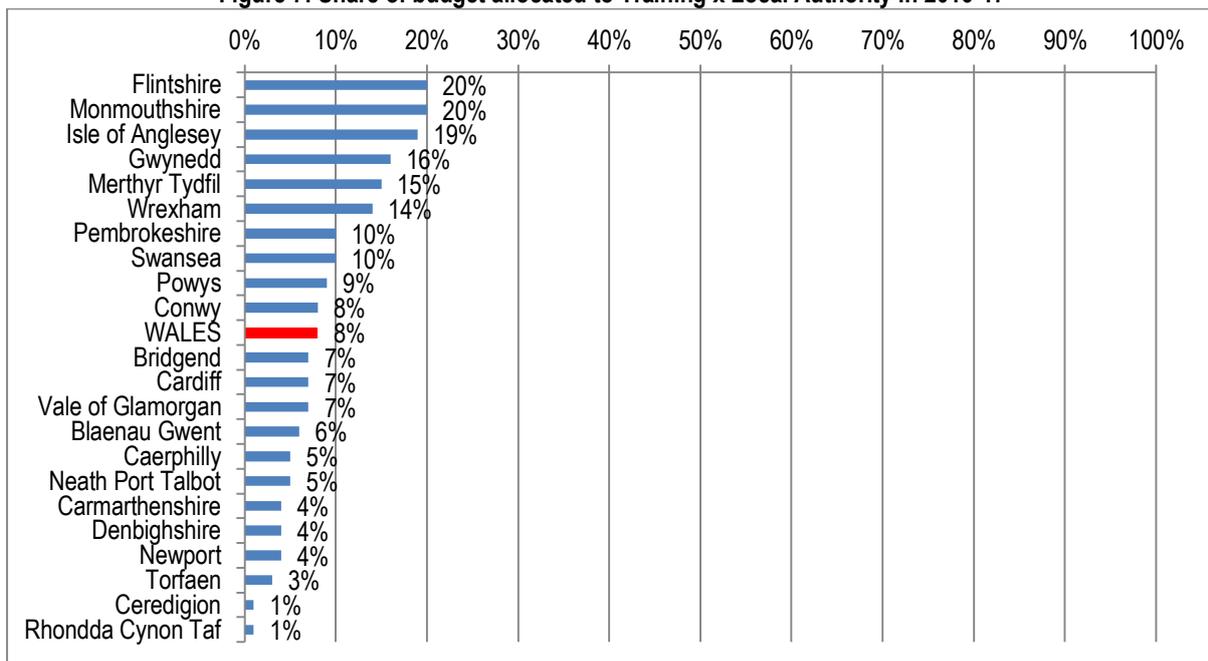


Figure 7 shows how much share of their YWSSG budget the Local Authorities directed towards Training provision.

Figure 7: Share of budget allocated to Training x Local Authority in 2016-17



It was not possible to identify how much of the training budget went towards **professional youth work training** (L2/L3 Youth Support Worker or L4-L7 Degree level qualifications) rather to more general training. Only five Local Authorities allocated budget specifically towards professional youth work qualifications (for others it was incorporated into a more general training budget). In 2015-16 **89% of all youth work delivery staff** held at least level two **Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) professional qualifications** (*Youth Work in Wales, 2015-16*). Table 4 places percentage of YWSSG budget spent on training alongside percentage of staff trained to at least JNC Level 2, showing little relationship between these two figures.

**Table 4: Share of budget allocated to Training in 2016-17 x Percentage of staff qualified to at least JNC Level 2 in 2015-16**

Local Authority	Spend on Training	% JNC Qualified (at least level 2)	# Not JNC qualified to level 2 but in training	# Not JNC qualified to level 2 and not in training
Flintshire	20%	86%	6	14
Monmouthshire	20%	91%	0	9
Isle of Anglesey	19%	74%	7	3
Gwynedd	16%	95%	0	11
Merthyr Tydfil	15%	99%	0	1
Wrexham	14%	97%	5	0
Pembrokeshire	10%	87%	2	18
Swansea	10%	64%	9	3
Powys	9%	89%	0	4
Conwy	8%	97%	5	1
<b>WALES</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>108</b>
Bridgend	7%	100%	0	0
Cardiff	7%	99%	4	0
Vale of Glamorgan	7%	94%	9	9
Blaenau Gwent	6%	98%	2	0
Caerphilly	5%	71%	14	17
Neath Port Talbot	5%	92%	1	17
Carmarthenshire	4%	97%	0	1
Denbighshire	4%	98%	3	0
Newport	4%	95%	7	0
Torfaen	3%	83%	5	0
Ceredigion	1%	90%	1	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1%	92%	4	0

Data on *number* of staff JNC qualified comes from: <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Youth-Service/Workforce/managementanddeliverystaff-by-localauthority-qualifications> accessed 30/6/17. Data on *percentages* comes from *Youth Work in Wales 2015-16*

There would be some value in **splitting the training criteria so that spend on professional qualifications is distinct from other training** so that it may be linked more closely to needs and deficits within local authorities.

## 5 OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE YOUTH WORK STRATEGY

### 5.1 Supporting Young People to Develop Life Skills and Resilience

In a section of the *National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018* entitled *Supporting young people to develop life skills and resilience*, the following was stated (bold has been added by the reviewer for emphasis):

The actions of the Welsh Government and those of key partners and delivery organisations should support the following strategic outcomes from youth work provision.

- Youth work provision is accessible to all young people in Wales and acts as an **effective preventative service**, supporting young people's **engagement and progression in education and training in preparation for employment and wider adult life**.
- **Open access provision** is used effectively to engage and signpost young people requiring more targeted support.
- **Youth work provision interacts effectively with formal education** providers to support positive outcomes for young people and support a **sustained reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, training or employment**.
- **Statutory and voluntary youth work** provision is aligned and presented to young people in a coherent offer.
- Youth work provision strategically contributes to the **Welsh Language Strategy *A living language***, and creates opportunities for the use of Welsh in social settings.
- Youth work provision evidences how it **supports cross-governmental priorities** (including UNCRC, education, health and well-being, tackling poverty).

Before discussing the impact of the YWSSG on its three criteria, it is worth reflecting on how the YWSSG impacted on other areas of the Youth Work Strategy, namely:

- Welsh language provision;
- the voluntary youth sector;
- National Well-being Indicators.

### 5.2 Welsh Language

Eleven Local Authorities funded projects that had the promotion of the Welsh Language and/or culture as core components, many of which were Local Authorities that prior to this had weak Welsh language provision. Over three years this amounted to around **£633k (7.7%)** of the total Grant.

It is important to remember that this figure only relates to the Grant and does not reflect the totality of funding by Local Authorities towards Welsh language provision. For example, none of the four Local

Authorities with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers (Isle of Anglesey, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Gwynedd) had projects funded by the YWSSG aimed at the promotion of Welsh language and culture but they were most likely to be delivering all YWSSG projects bilingually. The Youth Work Audit also 2015-16 shows that these Local Authorities have the highest percentage of youth work projects delivered entirely or mainly through the Welsh language (not just YWSSG projects: all local projects)

Nevertheless, several Local Authorities identified the expansion of YWSSG as having had an important impact on the **expansion of Welsh language provision** within their area (see table 1 in section 3.2 *Impact on Change Management and Modernisation of Services*).

### 5.3 Voluntary Youth Sector

Fourteen Local Authorities commissioned projects from the voluntary sector. There were 29 projects delivered under the YWSSG fully or partially by the voluntary youth sector. Several of these 'projects' actually funded multiple smaller projects (e.g. a Small Grants scheme in Wrexham). Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Menter Iaith Cymru appear regularly as recipients, showing an overlap with the promotion of the Welsh language. Sometimes there was a lack of detail about which voluntary organisations actually provided these projects.

This amounts to **£1.422m** funding over three years, or around **17%** of the Grant (by comparison the National Voluntary Youth Organisations [NVYO] Grant distributed around £655k of funds p.a. from 2015 onwards).

This was not evenly distributed. Over the three years Rhondda Cynon Taf directed £290k of the YWSSG towards the voluntary sector; Flintshire around £198k; Ceredigion around £165k, with large figures also for Isle of Anglesey, Bridgend, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, and Swansea. This funding went towards either Criteria A (YEPF) and Criteria B (Open Access) combined or towards Criteria B alone, and very rarely towards Criteria A alone. Feedback from CWVYS suggests that voluntary sector organisations also picked out in particular positive working relations with Caerphilly, Conwy, Gwynedd, Merthyr Tydfil and Vale of Glamorgan (many of those relationships will have been developed separately from the YWSSG).

Twelve Local Authorities also stated that they used the YWSSG to fund **training that included the voluntary youth sector**. However, the amount of money that went towards voluntary sector training was rarely specified and the number of people in the voluntary sector who received that training was almost always absent. If people in the voluntary sector were trained, it was barely visible in the Annual Evaluation reports.

Discussion with some voluntary sector organisations suggests that they often **did not know that the funding came from the YWSSG** rather than other funding streams.

The voluntary youth sector was also **rarely involved in deciding how the YWSSG should be spent**. They may have been involved in needs analysis or training needs analysis but very few interviewees stated that the voluntary youth sector were directly involved in spending decisions.

**Sharing of information** on the YWSSG by Local Authorities has therefore been patchy.

Overall, there may have been more involvement of the voluntary youth sector in all of the above but the

current monitoring and evaluation reports for the Grant are **not always very explicit and transparent** in relation to this. Nevertheless several Local Authorities reported that the YWSSG had assisted them in developing more collaborative partnership arrangements with the voluntary sector.

## 5.4 National Well-being Indicators

### 5.4.1 National Well-being Indicators within the Consultation Document *National Outcomes Framework for Youth Work (March 2016)*

The Welsh Government's consultation document *National Outcomes Framework for Youth Work (March 2016)* included a list of relevant National Well-being Indicators, drawn from the Welsh Government's document from 2015 entitled *How do you measure a Nation's progress*.

The indicators that appear to be the most relevant to the YWSSG are:

03	People making healthy lifestyle choices
05	School leavers with skills and qualifications
07	People not in education, employment or training
17	People feel involved in local decision making
18	People who volunteer
22	Positive mental well-being for all
25	People engaged in arts, culture and heritage
26	People using Welsh Language in everyday life
27	People participate in sports

Local Authorities were not asked to identify whether their projects were expected to impact on any of these National Indicators and, should the YWSSG continue, it may be useful to make those links explicit.

Comment has already been made on 26 (Welsh Language); while 7 (young people who are NEET) is at the heart of the YEPF agenda. It is possible to also comment on two other National Indicators: 17 (People feel involved in local decision making) and 18 (People who volunteer).

### 5.4.2 Indicator 17: People Feel Involved in Local Decision Making

This has been interpreted as being any project that entirely or partially develops structures and processes to involve young people in **participation** activities. Over three years this amounted to **£675,460 (8.2%** of YWSSG spending) across nine Local Authorities.

### 5.4.3 Indicator 18: People who Volunteer

This has been interpreted as being any project that entirely or partially involves or develops **volunteers** (it is not always clear whether the 'volunteer' is a young person or an adult but it has been assumed that it was always a young person). Over three years this amounted to **£634,974 (7.7%** of YWSSG spending) across nine Local Authorities (eight of which were the same as for the participation Indicator).

### 5.4.4 Summary

There may be some benefit, should the YWSSG continue, in asking Local Authorities to comment on which of the National Indicators each project is likely to impact on. A distinction would need to be made between projects where the Indicators would be a primary focus (which should have associated output/outcome targets) and those for which the Indicator was a secondary benefit (no requirement for targets).

If this was put in place, then it would be possible to look at budget distribution as per the table below (which has been partially completed with known information).

National Indicator	Budget that entirely or partially should impact on this indicator	% of overall YWSSG Budget
03	People making healthy lifestyle choices	
05	School leavers with skills and qualifications	
07	People not in education, employment or training (YEPF)	56%
17	People feel involved in local decision making	8.2%
18	People who volunteer	7.7%
22	Positive mental well-being for all	
25	People engaged in arts, culture and heritage	
26	People using Welsh Language in everyday life	7.7%
27	People participate in sports	

## 6 DECISION-MAKING ON SPENDING

### 6.1 Who was Involved in Decision-Making about how to Spend the Grant?

The 20 PYOs who were interviewed were asked **who was involved in the decision-making** about how the YWSSG would be spent:

- All included **themselves and their management team**, some with their own line managers also. Often these were the primary decision-makers for the first year of the Grant but consultation was widened for the following years.
- It was less clear how much they involved their own **staff**; only seven specifically mentioned their wider staff group.
- Eight spoke of the **involvement of young people**. This was primarily by consulting young people on what they wanted and what they felt about existing services. In Flintshire, where projects were able to bid for funding, some young people were involved in the Panel that decided which projects to fund; similarly in Wrexham they were involved in making decisions about the distribution of Small Grants that were funded by the YWSSG.
- Seven talked of a strategic approach **across different sections and departments within the Local Authority**. For example, Blaenau Gwent said: “We have a Raising Aspirations Group to oversee the YEPF. It looks at new grant opportunities and decides who should take it forward to avoid competition and duplication. It has led to clarity about where the gaps are.”
- Two talked of involving **partner statutory agencies outside the Local Authority**. There may have been more but they were not mentioned in the interviews. One PYO said “Changing dynamics often preclude having the capacity to talk to other agencies.”

- Two talked of involving the **Voluntary Youth Sector** (Denbighshire and Flintshire). Another said: “We didn’t involve the voluntary youth sector: they get a substantial amount already from core funding and we wanted to focus on NEETs, in line with the strategy.”
- Only one talked of involving **Regional partners**, particularly around regional training (but it is clear that Regional training occurred in North Wales, South East Wales and West Wales).

Given that this was an open question in the interview, it may be that some of the above figures are under-reported.

The use of **needs analysis and local data** (e.g. on young people who are NEET or Anti-Social Behaviour) was mentioned by only six interviewees. The supporting paperwork also contains minimal explanation of the needs analysis underpinning decisions. Only a couple of Local Authorities made explicit reference to the gaps identified in local Single Integrated Plans (although the SIPs themselves are not strong as a whole in identifying gaps relating to youth work services). However, as Local Authorities were not asked to provide this information in their Work plans, it would not be fair to be critical of this.

## 6.2 Placing Decision-Making in a Wider Strategic Context

The **monitoring and evaluation processes are focussed on the small picture**, the impact of projects, rather than the bigger picture about strategic choices, change and population-wide impact.

The **variations in how Local Authorities have used the YWSSG reflect local needs, local contexts and strategic priorities**. For example:

- where the Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator (EPC) and Youth Service Manager are managed by the same person, that might edge the use of the Grant towards YEPF.
- If local Open Access provision or Welsh Language provision or the local Voluntary Youth Sector are strong and/or already well-funded from core budget, then they may be a lower priority for the YWSSG.
- If the Local Authority has had a substantial reduction in its core budget, and/or has taken a strategic decision to outsource services, that might lead to prominent use of the YWSSG to fund and develop commissioned Open Access services.
- If the Youth Service is managed alongside other teams and/or funding sources (e.g. Youth Offending Team, Communities First, Families First), that might influence decision-making. Several interviewees mentioned the value and importance of being able to align multiple funding streams.

The YWSSG is being reviewed in isolation from the bigger local picture but is actually a piece of that jigsaw. So, if the YWSSG is to continue, and assuming that some form of Sufficiency Assessments are developed, how should those two fit together?

As an illustration, figure 9 compares patterns the percentages of Year 11 leavers from school who are NEET to the percentage of the YWSSG budgeted for YEPF across the course of the Grant. In all Local Authority areas the percentage of Year 11 Leavers who are NEET declined from 2013-16. But there is

no relationship to the proportion of YWSSG spent on YEPF. An indication of how the YWSSG fits into the wider YEPF agenda, and how that agenda is being progressed, might be illuminating.

**Figure 8: Year 11 Leavers from schools in Wales known to be not in education, employment or training by local authority (year ending December) x % of YWSSG spent on YEPF 2014-17 (3 years)**

	% young people who are NEET				% YWSSG budgeted for YEPF 2014-17
	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Neath Port Talbot	4.4	3.8	3.6	3.6	71%
Cardiff	4.9	4.3	4.5	3.0	75%
Pembrokeshire	3.4	3.2	3.8	2.7	87%
Blaenau Gwent	4.6	3.4	2.4	2.5	36%
Isle of Anglesey	3.7	1.7	2.2	2.3	52%
Carmarthenshire	3.0	3.4	3.5	2.1	60%
Swansea	3.9	3.5	2.7	2.1	44%
Monmouthshire	2.8	1.7	1.9	2.0	38%
Torfaen	2.5	2.2	1.9	2.0	91%
<b>Wales</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>56%</b>
Caerphilly	4.4	3.5	2.1	1.9	71%
Denbighshire	4.1	2.1	3.1	1.9	46%
Powys	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.9	88%
Conwy	3.6	1.8	2.4	1.7	0%
Flintshire	3.6	1.3	1.3	1.7	26%
Newport	4.9	4.7	3.1	1.7	62%
The Vale of Glamorgan	3.8	2.8	1.7	1.6	48%
Bridgend	3.7	3.6	3.2	1.5	62%
Wrexham	3.2	1.8	1.7	1.4	36%
Gwynedd	2.4	1.7	1.8	1.1	66%
Ceredigion	1.3	1.8	1.4	1.0	65%
Merthyr Tydfil	1.9	2.6	1.6	1.0	72%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	4.1	3.9	3.7	1.0	23%

Source of data on young people who are NEET: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/young-people-not-education-employment-training/?lang=en> accessed on 10/6/17.

## 7 OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

### 7.1 Definitions

Within their Work Plans, Local Authorities were asked to specify “Planned actions, outputs, outcomes and milestones.” The Grant Offer Letters from the Welsh Government then reflected the outputs and outcomes back as “Targets.” In the Six-Monthly Progress Reports, the Welsh Government listed the targets and asked for “detail of any changes to original targets.” In the Annual Evaluations, the Work Plan tended to be used as a template, enabling Local Authorities to report on each individual project; there were also sections at the back asking “Please indicate what outcomes and outputs have been achieved by young people as a result of this grant funding” and “Please indicate what outcomes and

outputs have been achieved by youth workers as a result of this grant.” Often very similar things were reported in the different sections of the Annual Evaluations (or there were “As above” responses or sections were left blank), indicating that this format was not ideal. More is said on monitoring and evaluation later.

Although Local Authorities were asked to provide information on outputs and outcomes in their Work plans, the YWSSG process **did not provide definitions of what is meant by an output or an outcome**. These terms are also not defined in the Welsh Government’s consultation document *National Outcomes Framework for Youth Work* (March 2016).

When Local Authorities were defining their outputs and outcomes, therefore, they applied their own local understanding of these terms. Sometimes the techniques used (such as Results-Based Accountability, or RBA) are stated. More often they are not.

In analysing the impact of the YWSSG, the reviewer needed to produce some working definitions to assist with this. These were:

- **Inputs:** the resources used to deliver a service (staffing, resources).
- **Outputs:** how much did we do (things we can count)?
- **Project Outcomes:** Did we make a difference? Is anyone better off?
- **Population-wide Outcomes (Impact):** e.g. fall in young people who are NEET, reduced ASB, reduced substance misuse etc. There was a general absence of population-wide outcomes, with a handful of exceptions.

Based on the information present in the Work Plans and Annual Evaluations, it was possible to subdivide the *data* on outputs and outcomes as follows:

<b>Outputs</b>	<b>P1</b> How many young people did we engage?	- #Contacts - Attendances
	<b>P2</b> How many young people did we work directly with?	- #YP worked with - #YP from specific groups worked with (#Risk of becoming NEET, #NEET) - #YP involved in participation/volunteering activities - #YP participating in issue-based workshops - #YP participating in accredited programmes
	<b>P3</b> How much did we deliver	- #Programmes - #Activities - Sessions (e.g. #youth club sessions, #detached/outreach sessions, #drop-in sessions, #tasters/promotional events, #residential, #holiday sessions, #Hours delivered) - #issue-based workshops delivered - Training sessions delivered to practitioners

	<b>P4</b> Professional Youth Work Qualifications <i>supported</i>	- L4-L6 Youth Worker degree level - L2-L3 Youth Support Worker
	<b>P5</b> Training participants	- # practitioners participating in training
	<b>P6</b> How well did we deliver?	- Satisfaction with delivery
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>C1</b> Accreditations	# Accreditations
	<b>C2</b> ETE Progress	- #Maintaining engagement with ETE - #Progressing through the Tier Model - #Skills development relating to employability - #Improved attitude to ETE
	<b>C3</b> General soft indicators	e.g. - Self-expressed improvement in skills/knowledge - Self-expressed improvement in confidence/self-esteem
	<b>C4</b> Progress reported using specific techniques:	e.g. - Distance travelled - Outcomes stars - RBA

The above definitions enabled most data items to be classified under one of the P or C headings in a spreadsheet.

There was also qualitative text in the Annual Evaluations in addition to the output and outcome data, which tended to describe:

- **Infrastructure developments:** e.g. development of Lead Worker role, developing of information systems, development of closer working partnerships.
- **Services delivered and detail on what young people experienced as a result** (a qualitative description of outputs).
- **Cases studies showing the impact on individual young people** (a qualitative description of outcomes – less prevalent).

## 7.2 Methodological Difficulties with the Data

Once data was classified, the usefulness of that data was looked at. Across the 22 Local Authorities, there were **196 “projects”** (areas of activity against which there was a specified budget).

There were several common methodological problems that limited the use of the data to review the impact of the YWSSG.

Often there was an **absence of baselines or targets**. Some 13 of the 22 Local Authorities had one or more projects where this was lacking. While it is understandable that there may be reluctance to specify a target for a new, innovative project, it should always be attempted. This can then be revised and reported on if figures are either better or worse than had been anticipated: variations to original targets might indicate success, failure, or lessons that were learned and responded to. Without this starting benchmark, it is harder for the external reader to understand impact. Nevertheless, excluding

projects that were oriented towards training, all projects but one reported either a P1 (How many young people did we engage?) or P2 (How many young people did we work directly with?) figure; and the one that did not was discontinued.

For 27 projects across 14 Local Authorities, the **data items reported on in Annual Evaluations were on different indicators to the targets** set for those projects.

There were many projects that provided **too much data, with too little aggregation**. Additional data is fine, as long as it can be related back to the original targets. But when the target was to work with 100 young people and then the reporting says 20 young people did this, 50 young people did that, 60 young people did something else, 30 young people did that other thing – is that 160 young people (a total of the lot); or is it 20 young people (the same young people repeating their involvement in several of the elements several times)? This difficulty was present in 19 projects across 9 Local Authorities.

Less common was reporting data **by quarter rather than annual totals**. Where data is reported across four quarters, does that mean the four quarters can legitimately be added together (often it does, for example if it relates to P1 data on Contacts), or should never be (e.g. Quarter 1 22 young involved in a group session, Quarter 2 21 young people: these may well be the same young people). While it was possible most of the time to work out how this should be interpreted, it would be simpler if annual reporting showed annual data.

Often there was **poor use of numbers and percentages**. Percentages should not be reported without an associated number (a rise of 1 on a baseline of 1 is 100%; a rise of 1 on a baseline of 100 is 1%). This happened frequently. It is also possible to underachieve on a percentage but achieve overall:

e.g. target of working with 100 young people and 85% (n=85) progressing through the Tier model. Project actually worked with 300 young people, 200 of whom progressed through the Tier Model. So substantially more made progress (200>85) but this is lower as a percentage (85/100 target = 85%; 200/300 actual = 67%). So it is important to always include a number where a target is set as a percentage.

**Failure to provide any quantitative data.** There were some projects with either no data reporting, minimal data reporting, or an avoidance of reporting against their defined measures.

The absence of robust information in the monitoring and evaluation documents **does not mean that Local Authorities are not collecting it**. It means that it is not being reported in a consistent manner to enable it to be used meaningfully at national level; this makes this a problem that can be solved.

While the Local Authorities have liked the flexibility and looseness of reporting arrangements, there are definitely ways that this might be improved in the future, should the Grant continue, while preserving a high degree of flexibility.

## 7.3 Data

### 7.3.1 Were Output and Outcome Targets Met?

The methodological difficulties in tracking achievement of outputs and outcomes were reflected in the answer to the question of whether output and outcome targets were met.

For the 196 projects, 37 exceeded their **output targets**, 13 met them, for seven it varied from year to

year, for four targets were not quite met and for four they were not met. For new projects for 2016-17 it was too early to make this judgement, as the 2016-17 Annual Evaluation had not yet been completed. So in terms of progress against targets, there was not a substantial amount of *quantitative* evidence.

For the same projects, 20 exceeded their **outcome targets**, 11 met them, seven had a mixed outcome (some met, some not), and for three it varied from year to year. So again, against targets, there was not a substantial amount of *quantitative* evidence.

The absence of robust data has made it more difficult to evidence achievement against targets. This does not mean that there was lack of impact, but means there was more reliance on the qualitative text in documents and the interviews with PYOs, with the text in the supporting documents often being more of a description of how a project was delivered rather than its impact.

### 7.3.2 P1 How Many Young People Did We Engage?

This category was used where the data showed general figures on contacts or attendance rather than work with individual registered young people.

This will be under-reported because of the methodological difficulties reported in the previous section of this report, but the overall figures for the YWSSG in 2014-15 and 2015-16 were:

- 31,495 young people being engaged generally (difficult to identify the nature of the engagement);
- 27,421 contacts (including drop-in attendances and detached/outreach work);
- 6,177 involved in summer/holiday programmes;
- 1,376 who were felt to have been at risk of becoming NEETS or who were NEET (where the nature of the work with them suggests that this was nevertheless a 'Contact' rather than direct work, although it is not possible to be certain about this).

### 7.3.3 P2 How Many Young People Did We Work Directly With?

This category was used where there was direct work (individual or in groups) with registered individuals. These figures are likely to be more accurate than for P1 but there was probably still some under-reporting against this. Also the figures shown below show the aggregate for 2014-15 and 2015-16 so many may be the same young people in both years:

- 7,780 young people worked with were at risk of becoming NEET or who were NEET;
- 510 of the young people were disabled or had additional learning needs;
- 1,939 of the young people worked with were not in a specific target group;
- 268 were at Tier 1 or Tier 2 of the Career Wales five-tier model of engagement.

With regards to those who were at risk of becoming NEET or already NEET:

- It was not possible to say consistently which of these two subdivisions the young people were in;
- It was not always possible to say consistently whether the young people were pre-16 or post-16 (post Year 11);
- The Career Wales five-tier model was not often favoured as the language for describing these young people. The Tiers are defined from a post-16 Careers Wales perspective so young people were often not defined according to the Tiers.

Had these distinctions been clearer on a consistent basis in the data, their aggregation at national level

might have been more informative.

The data also reflected young people's involvement in **participation and volunteering** opportunities and it is probable that this data is more robust:

- 1,197 volunteers were recruited via YWSSG projects;
- Probably in addition to that figure, there were 47 peer educators, 87 young leaders, 24 youth inspectors, and 12 Youth Ambassadors;
- 205 young people had been supported to be involved in youth forums;
- 355 young people had been involved in consultation processes;
- 26 young people had been involved in decision making the allocation of grants.

Where participation was at the heart of a project, there tended to be a substantial volume of text in the Annual Evaluations describing the activities that the young people were involved in and its impact.

For 2014-15 and 2015-16, 11,283 young people participated in **issue-based workshops**. This is probably under-reported. Of these, 3,872 young people attended workshops linked to healthy lifestyles, easily the largest topic.

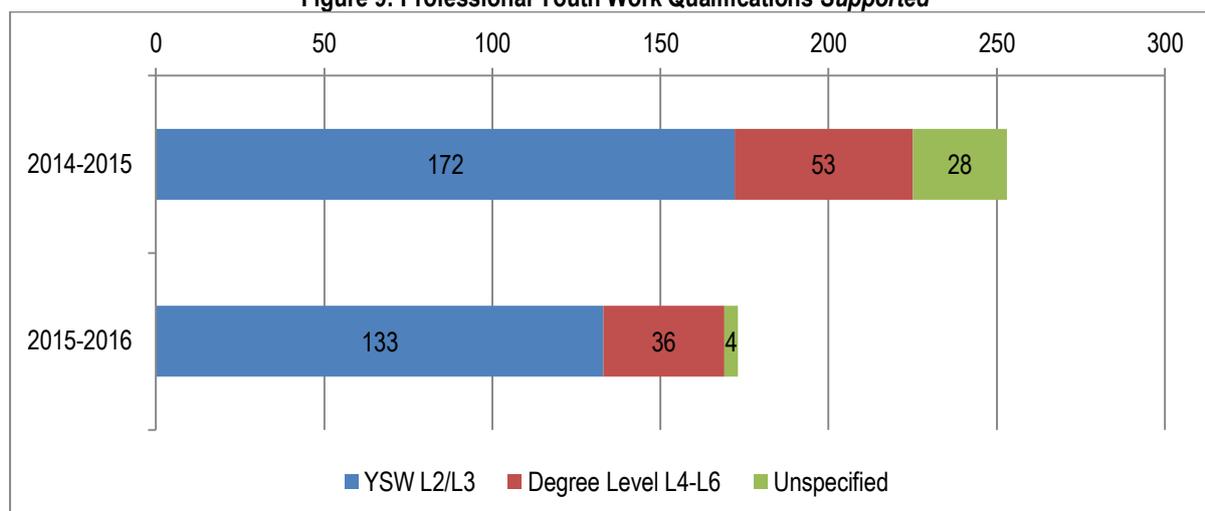
#### 7.3.4 P3 How Much Did We Deliver?

The nature and diverse range of data on "how much did we deliver" (programmes, sessions etc.) make it difficult to analyse and aggregate this data in a meaningful way. It is useful information on a project-by-project basis but is not helpful to a review of impact.

#### 7.3.5 P4 Professional Youth Work Qualifications Supported?

Figure 9 shows the number of people *supported* to acquire a professional youth work qualification in 2014-15 and 2015-16 via the YWSSG. For both Youth Support Workers (L2-L3) and Degree level (L4-L6) the numbers fall from the first to the second year of the Grant, a decrease of 33% (2014-15 n=258; 2015-16 n=174). Section 4.3.3 of this report suggested splitting out professional training from the training criteria for the YWSSG.

Figure 9: Professional Youth Work Qualifications Supported



### 7.3.6 P5 Training Participants

P5 was intended to identify the number of participants on training courses that were not professional youth work qualifications (i.e. they had a focus on particular topics). Several of the interviewees commented on the importance of this training where they were refocussing their service and upskilling their staff. Sometimes the Annual Evaluations stated what courses were run but not always how many practitioners attended. The highest reported numbers for participants were for:

- “Regional training”: 632 participants;
- General unspecified Continuing Professional Development: 447 participants;
- “Training seminars” (unspecific): 443 participants;
- Child exploitation and online protection: 371 participants;
- Participation: 333 participants
- Substance misuse: 295 participants;
- Mental health: 184 participants;
- Challenging behaviours: 175 participants;
- Health: 151 participants;
- Vulnerable young people: 131 participants;
- Equality and diversity: 130 participants;
- Sexual health: 128 participants.

The figures above are interesting but more detail in reporting would have been more informative.

Regional training occurred in the South East and West in particular (possibly also in North Wales although it is unclear if the YWSSG supported this). The advantages of regional training included economies of scale in addressing specialist training and opportunities for networking. However, this was reported as being difficult to deliver sometimes, given that different Local Authorities might have different priorities.

### 7.3.7 P6 How Well Did We Deliver?

There were some data items collected that focussed on the satisfaction of young people with the quality of session delivery (rather than the impact on them in terms of new skills or knowledge). This is useful data to reflect on the effectiveness of how a service was delivered but not useful in terms of evaluating the overall impact of the YWSSG so no analysis has been undertaken on this.

### 7.3.8 C1 Accreditations

All but one of the 22 Local Authorities have projects that involve the provision of accredited outcomes for young people. Over three years projects that involved accreditation amounted to **£4.756m (58%)** of the total Grant.

There were projects with the word “accreditation” in their title in seven Local Authorities (Isle of Anglesey, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Conwy, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Swansea and Torfaen).

In 2015-16 the Youth Work Audit reported that 10,561 young people gained a national accreditation and 12,158 gained a local accreditation, a total of **22,719 accreditations** in 2015-16. From data reported in the Annual Evaluation forms, a total of **12,106 accreditations** were gained over the two years of 2014-15 (6,829 in 2014-15 and 5,277 in 2015-16). So **the YWSSG has contributed substantially to the number of accreditations** (23%, n=5277/22719 in 2015-16).

There is minimal distinction in the YWSSG reporting about what **types of accreditations** were awarded and whether these are **national or local** accreditations. Existing management information systems presumably record effectively how many young people receive accreditations in order to complete the Audit return: it may be difficult to identify how many of these were in YWSSG funded projects although if that data was accessible it would help to identify the full impact of the Grant. The spreadsheet being used by the Welsh Government to collect data on the YWSSG for 2017-18 asks for more detail on accreditation than in the past.

### 7.3.9 C2 ETE Progress

Criteria A on YEPF was allocated **£4,611,649.92 (56%)** of the YWSSG budget over three years of the Grant. This substantial figure might also be expected to deliver substantial results.

Certainly reduced numbers of young people who are NEET, for every Local Authority (see figure 9 in section 6.2), indicates that a combination of resources have had an impact on rates of young people who are NEET. The problem is that this has been poorly reported against the YWSSG. Targets and outcomes tend to be reported as percentages (e.g. X% demonstrating employability skills) but with no numbers to support this. Without numbers, these figures cannot be aggregated at national level. In 2014-15, of 20 ETE progress indicators that were reported on as a percentage, only four had accompanying numbers; in 2015-16 of the 37 reported on as a percentage, only two had numbers.

Nevertheless, the following data was available:

- 835 young people progressed through the Tier Model in 2014-15 and 2015-16;
- 732 were supported to maintain their engagement with ETE and a further 293 were supported to continue their engagement with ETE post-16;
- 317 were helped to access ETE;
- 147 were assisted in developing skills related to employability;
- 144 had an improved attitude to learning, training and employment.

According to data on young people who are NEET for end of December 2016 there were 13,300 young people in Wales aged 16-18 who were NEET and 51,000 aged 19-24; at the end of 2016 the figures were 9,100 young people aged 16-18 and 42,000 aged 19-24.<sup>2</sup> This means that over that period, there was a reduction in the number of young people aged 16-24 who were NEET in Wales of 13,200, in line with one of the desired impacts of the *Youth Work Strategy 2014-18*.

It is clear from the feedback from PYOs that they believe that the YWSSG has had a major impact on the YEPF agenda. Young people who are at risk of becoming NEET or who are NEET are likely to be difficult to engage through formal school settings and it is probable that the application of youth work methods has contributed to the sustained nationwide reduction in young people who are NEET. In addition the YWSSG has helped to build partnerships and pathways with schools in particular, and PYOs believed that it has helped to reduce the percentage of young people who are NEET. This is not borne up strongly in the data because of deficits in the data.

### 7.3.10 C3 General Soft Indicators

There were few 'soft indicators' specified in Work Plans. Welsh Government had stated that they were less interested in data in these areas. Many of the soft indicators reported related to improvements in confidence or improvement in skills/knowledge. Some were linked to young people, and some related

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<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/young-people-not-education-employment-training/?lang=en> accessed on 10/6/17.

to the impact of training on professionals. As with C2 on ETE Progress, reporting tended to be expressed as a percentage only. While it is commendable that there were attempts to include soft indicators in reporting, this means that it is not possible to aggregate what little data there was.

### 7.3.11 Summary of the Data

Overall the Grant has undoubtedly had more impact than the data suggests. Data deficits have made it difficult to review the impact of the Grant as effectively as would be preferred using data, but the feedback from the PYOs strongly suggests that the Grant has been positive. Local Authorities are probably collecting much more data than was being reported in the Annual Evaluations so the problems with the data are probably easy to solve. Some of the qualitative content of the YWSSG Annual Evaluations, including case studies, also serve to illustrate more localised impact, although they are not easy to aggregate usefully in a report of this kind.

## 8 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE GRANT

### 8.1 Views from the PYOs on Monitoring Requirements

There are two mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Grant by the Welsh Government: the Six-Month Monitoring Progress Report and Annual Evaluation Reports.

The general view from the PYOs was that these were easy to complete and were in line with what would be expected for a grant of this size. However, six commented that they felt that they did not produce enough accountability to the Welsh Government:

- two felt that quarterly reporting would be more appropriate (and in line with requirements for other Grants);
- one that felt the Youth Work Branch should make periodic site visits to each Local Authority as part of an ongoing monitoring process;
- two that felt there should be increased scrutiny of how the money was spent;
- one commented that “I don’t know how much value Welsh Government can demonstrate” from the monitoring forms.

This reviewer originally wished to compare budgets and expenditure as part of the review but could only look at budgets because spending was not being reported to the Welsh Government sufficiently.

### 8.2 Six-Month Monitoring Progress Report

The Six-Month Monitoring Progress Report has two columns. One lists all the targets for a project. The other is entitled “Detail any changes to original targets.”

Over the three years of the Grant the completion of the Six-Month Progress Report followed a consistent pattern:

- Twelve Local Authorities always reported progress against each of their targets;
- Two Local Authorities provided qualitative descriptions of what they had done;
- The rest either said there was no change, highlighted areas of change only, or left the form blank.

Occasionally reference was made to changes in how the money was being spent (typically if someone was long-term sick), stating that this had been agreed with the Youth Work Branch of Welsh Government. The Youth Work Branch was felt to be very supportive in these circumstances. While it is appropriate that this should be underpinned by direct verbal communication between Local Authorities and the Youth Work Branch, there should be a simple single page document to confirm and record this agreement (description of change; reason for change; amount of spending being changed; signed and dated by both parties).

From this reviewer's perspective, the data is much more useful at the end of the year and the level of detail being completed in the Six-Month Monitoring Progress Report was less helpful. The fact that the second column is entitled "Detail any changes to original targets" suggests brevity of response is acceptable; but the listing of all targets encourages Local Authorities to feel the need to write something against each. If the Welsh Government needs and uses that level of detail, then all Local Authorities should be completing it. If instead the Welsh Government needs to know whether projects are on track and/or what difficulties are being experienced and/or how much money has been spent so far, then the format for the Six-Month Monitoring Progress Report needs to be changed.

### 8.3 Annual Evaluation Reports

Most of the time the Annual Evaluation was in the form of an update of the Work Plan for that year. Typically there is commentary on achievement of the targets, how the project has been delivered, development of partnership working and infrastructure developments. Sometimes there are case study examples. This format has varied slightly across the years of the Grant.

For 2016-17, the Welsh Government has provided a spreadsheet which asks, for each target, for an indication of:

- The number of young people engaged as a result of the Grant;
- The number and type of accreditations achieved by young people as a result of the Grant;
- The organisations/partners worked with as a result of the Grant;
- Other outcomes achieved as a result of the Grant.

It also asks for lessons learned and examples of good practice.

### 8.4 Areas of Difficulty and Potential Improvements

There was a general recognition that it is important to be transparently accountable for public money. This review has revealed several areas of difficulty with the current monitoring arrangements that have inhibited the effectiveness of the review:

- **Absence of strategic context.** Where Local Authorities explained why they had chosen their projects, how they fitted with modernisation/change management processes, how innovative/creative they were, how they have aligned and leveraged in money from multiple funding streams, and the strategic impact that they were having, this was powerful. It emerged more from the interviews than the documentation. Ongoing monitoring of the impact of the Grant would be more effective if there was more reflection of need analysis and strategic context within the documentation. This does not have to be long and bureaucratic but it would

be worth incorporating should the YWSSG continue beyond 2017-18.

- **Methodological difficulties with the data.** The format for 2017-18 will not address the difficulties already present. This will only be addressed by setting clearer expectations of the format for any targets and data provided and working with Local Authorities to ensure that, where there are deficits, these are addressed. Local Authorities undoubtedly have much more data that might be used for monitoring and evaluation than is currently being recorded; it would require someone in the Youth Work Branch to check actively the information that has been returned and go back to Local Authorities where there are deficits to improve that information. There are resources that the reviewer has developed to undertake this review that provide a format to assist with that. In other words, it requires **more active monitoring of the data to ensure that it is more robust.**
- **Monitoring of Spending.** At the end of the year there should be a statement from each Local Authority of how the money was spent. During the year, when spending changes (by agreement with the Welsh Government) there should be a formal record of that change and the reason for it.
- With regards to the **Six-Month Progress Report**, the Welsh Government needs to be clearer about the purpose of this and ensure that it is completed in a consistent manner. This reviewer would favour listing of the projects only, without their targets, with a focus on qualitative description of whether those projects are on track.

## 9 FUTURE OF THE GRANT

“Hope Welsh Government realise the value of the Grant. It is really, really useful to us.”

“Tremendous. Really had an impact.”

“Leave it alone. Don’t change it. It works.”

“Don’t fiddle with it.”

“If the Welsh Government want a professional, registered youth work workforce it is critical.”

“Without it training would not be sustained.”

The PYOs interviewed were unanimous in wanting the **YWSSG to continue as it is, with the same or increased levels of funding.** The three criteria were felt to be helpful. It would need to be aligned to any new Youth Work Strategy and the review of Extending Entitlement, but overall they wanted minimal change.

One interviewee commented that he could understand that the flexibility of the Grant might raise doubts about its value but this was seen as a strength by most interviewees:

“It has to be responsive to different models and configurations of youth work.”

“Every Council is different. I welcome that [the flexibility].”

They felt that it was providing added value, allowing new and innovation approaches to be developed and tested, often in support of strategic change:

“It has added value to existing services.”

“It needs to focus on innovation in the future.”

“It is a fundamental part of remodelling.”

“It allows us to align funding with other grants and funding streams.”

Several felt that assured funding over three to four years would create the stability to help them be even more effective with the Grant.

## 10 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key question for this review is **whether the Youth Work Strategy Support Grant has a value and has had an impact on the delivery of youth work provision across Wales.**

### 10.1 Impact

The **WLGA's** position is that, while there is a risk of further erosion of Youth Service provision should the YWSSG be withdrawn or merged into the RSG, all grants should be merged into the RSG for local determination, based on local need.

**PYOs argued strongly that the YWSSG has had a positive impact**, that it is **essential to keep it as a Grant** rather than absorb it into the RSG, and that the three criteria for it are appropriate and useful:

- It has **supported the roll-out of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**, and proportionally more of the Grant went towards this criteria in the third year than the first. The YEPF agenda also features strongly in feedback from the PYOs on areas in which the Grant has had its greatest impact.
- It has **supported Open Access provision, but often in a different model to the past** (more outreach than building-based provision, more outsourcing to the voluntary sector, or innovative projects responding to emergent needs).
- **Training has declined** over each of the years of the Grant and is now well below the level of funding that was previously provided by the Welsh Government via the Youth Work Training and Development Grant (although if the maximum 25% that is allowed under the Grant was spent on training it would be substantially higher).

The YWSSG monitoring and evaluation documentation that Local Authorities are required to complete do not ask Local Authorities to demonstrate the **needs analysis underpinning their choices** of projects nor the **strategic impact of the Grant**. Interviews with the PYOs were more insightful than the YWSSG documentation in drawing out messages about the impact of the Grant in supporting

change/modernisation, refocussing, responding to emergent needs, innovation/creativity, enhancing partnership working, and the alignment of multiple funding streams. The **flexibility** of the Grant is seen as essential in providing the ability to adapt to local circumstances, budgetary pressures and local priorities.

Overall PYOs view the Grant as being **immensely valuable to their ability to provide effective youth services in line with, and going beyond, the Youth Work Strategy.**

The **voluntary youth sector** received around **£1.422m** funding over three years of the YWSSG, or around **17% of the Grant** (by comparison the National Voluntary Youth Organisations [NVYO] Grant distributed around £655k of funds p.a. from 2015 onwards). This varies substantially across different Local Authorities however, and some of the Local Authorities who spent less of their YWSSG on the voluntary sector appear to have strong relationships with local voluntary organisations and/or said that they provided funding to the voluntary sector from their core budgets instead. So the YWSSG *has* had an impact on the voluntary sector but it is difficult to understand this fully without also understanding the full picture of how much money goes towards the voluntary sector from Local Authorities and what funding sources this comes from (YWSSG, core budget, other funds).

## **10.2 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Routine reporting on the YWSSG via the Six-Monthly Progress Reports and Annual Evaluations focusses primarily on **quantitative reporting against targets and qualitative descriptions of the services provided**, with some text also on case studies and/or the impact of the services on young people.

There are **deficits in the data** on both outputs and outcomes that mean that the quantitative impact is harder to assess than it should be. Absence of good quality evidence is not the same as evidence of the absence of impact, however.

Should the YWSSG continue there needs to be **adjustment to monitoring and evaluation arrangements** (see section 8.4) in order to increase scrutiny, accountability and understanding of the impact of the Grant (incorporate more strategic context; address the data deficits and enhance monitoring; increase reporting on spending; simplify the Six-Month Progress Report).

### 10.3 Recommendations

Despite some data deficits, it is possible to say that if the Grant was discontinued, and even if it was merged into the RSG, it would have a substantial impact on the volume and diversity of youth service provision; on the ability of Local Authority youth services to adapt, change and modernise; and on the progression of the YEPF agenda.

My recommendations are:

REC1:	Should the YWSSG continue it would need to be adjusted to fit with strategic priorities emergent from a revised Youth Work Strategy and/or Extending Entitlement review.
REC2:	Work plans for the YWSSG needs to include commentary on needs analysis and who was involved in that (e.g. young people, staff, partner agencies) and reasons for making strategic choices on how to spend the Grant.
REC3:	<p>The criteria and/or reporting might be usefully revised to enhance accountability while retaining flexibility by reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The extent to which the Grant has had a local strategic impact (change management/modernisation/refocussing; response to new emergent local needs; enhancements to partnership working; alignment of multiple funding streams); and an explanation of the factors that are driving these changes.</li><li>• Developing projects that are innovative/creative;</li><li>• Enhancing linkage to National Indicators for Well-being;</li><li>• Separating professional youth work training from the more general training element of the grant.</li></ul>
REC4:	The YWSSG need to be placed in a wider strategic context as it only shows part of the picture of local provision. A fuller review of all local services, including the role of the YWSSG, should be addressed via the Sufficiency Assessments that have been proposed in other reports and reviews.

## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

### Local Authority Interviewees

Isle of Anglesey	Enid Williams	Principal Youth Officer.
Blaenau Gwent	Joanne Sims	Youth Service Manager; Chair of the Principal Youth Officers Group (PYOG).
Caerphilly	Paul O'Neill	Senior Youth Manager.
Cardiff	Simon Morris	Achievement Leader, Engagement and Progression.
Carmarthenshire	Gill Adams	Principal Manager, Youth Support Service.
Ceredigion	Elen James Lowri Evans	Head of Youth Engagement and Continuing Education. Acting Principal Youth Officer.
Conwy	Jane Williams	Section Head, Conwy Youth Service.
Denbighshire	Roger Ellerton	Lead Officer, Community Well-being.
Flintshire	Ann Roberts	Integrated Youth Provision Manager.
Gwynedd	Nia Morris	Principal Youth Officer.
Merthyr Tydfil	Samantha Morgan	Youth Services Support Manager.
Monmouthshire	Josh Klein	Youth Work Manager.
Neath Port Talbot	Jason Haeney	Principal Youth & Community Officer, Neath Port Talbot Youth Service.
Newport	Susan Calnon	Youth Service Manager.
Pembrokeshire	Steve Davis	Service Manager, Pembrokeshire Youth; Vice Chair PYOG.
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Geraint Evans	Youth Support Services Manager.
Swansea	Gavin Evans	Young People's Services Manager.
Torfaen	David Williams	Service Manager, Torfaen Youth Service.
Vale of Glamorgan	Andy Borsden	Lead Officer, Social Inclusion and Well-being.
Wrexham	Donna Dickenson	Service Manager, Prevention and Support.

### Other Interviewees

Dai Bryer	Urdd Gobaith Cymru	Director of the Community Department – South Wales.
Catherine Carr	Barnardos Cymru	Children's Services Manager, Flintshire Services.
Paul Glaze	CWVYS	Chief Executive.
Gayle Harris	Dr Mz, Carmarthen	Centre Manager.
Beth Cameron-Lyle	Breathing Space, Flintshire	
Tim Opie	WLGA	Lifelong Learning Policy Officer (Youth).
Stephanie Price	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Director – Wales.