



**WALES  
CYMRU**

**RESPONSE TO:**

**A vision for a new youth strategy for  
Wales 2013-2018**

**CONSULTATION**

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11<sup>th</sup> September 2013

1. The University and College Union (UCU Wales) represents more than 7,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians, and postgraduates in universities, colleges, adult education and training organisations across Wales.
2. UCU Wales is a politically autonomous but integral part of UCU, the largest post-school union in the world: a force for educators and education that employers and government cannot ignore.
3. UCU was formed on the 1st June 2006 by the amalgamation of two strong partners – the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) – who shared a long history of defending and advancing educators’ employment and professional interests.
4. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the vision for a new national youth work strategy for Wales 2013-2018
5. Although we do not feel it appropriate to comment on all of the proposals outlined in the consultation document we would like make the following points.

### **Proposal 1**

#### **Alignment of Youth Service delivery in support of priorities for education.**

6. Youth services can play an important role in engaging young people and providing alternative routes into education and employment. For some young people formal education is not always the best way forward, therefore improved partnerships could enhance the awareness and provision of opportunities available to those who might otherwise remain disengaged.
7. However we note that Further Education has not been included in this proposal and would suggest that as the youth work services is aimed at 11 – 25 year olds, it would be beneficial to include partnership with Further Education Institutions (FEI’s).
8. FEI’s are also key partners in education and understand the advantages that informal educational experience can have on improving barriers to education such as poor behaviour, attendance and relationship difficulties. Aligning youth services with FE as well as

schools, would improve the communications networks between the key partners and help to better inform education professionals of a wider range of opportunities available to support the holistic development of young people in Wales.

### **Proposal 7**

#### **Strengthening the evidence base through a National Outcomes framework and Quality Mark**

9. As stated in the consultation document, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence supporting the positive impact that youth services have on young people and the communities that they live in. It is also acknowledged that this impact can be hard to measure. It is important therefore that in devising a National Outcomes Framework and Quality Mark, practicing youth workers should be consulted and be able to advise on the formulation of assessment criteria to ensure that the essence of what makes youth work successful, is not lost.

### **Proposal 9**

#### **Leadership, oversight and advice**

10. We agree that communication between Ministers and stakeholders is important in delivering appropriate services in Wales and are pleased to see that key groups will be engaged in this process. However, as stated previously, we note that Further Education has not been included in this proposal and would suggest that as the youth work services is aimed at 11 – 25 year olds, it would be beneficial to include Further Education Institutions. The inclusion of FE in the Youth Service Reference group would help to provide clearer understanding of a wider range of complimentary services available to young people. This would also tie in with the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework which states that amongst other providers, FE colleges should demonstrate stronger accountability for the engagement and progression of young people. If Further Education Institutions are to be held more accountable, it is vital that they should be included in any stakeholder engagement.

11. We agree that there is an important complimentary value in youth work that enhances the development of individual potential and in turn can help to improve economic and social well-being and that recognition needs to be given to this contribution. Likewise, the contribution of Further Education in enhancing opportunities for youth engagement should be embraced in the new national youth work strategy for Wales.