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Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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Consultation – summary of response

## **Registration of youth workers with the Education Workforce Council**

Date of issue: June 2016

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

## **Registration of youth workers with the Education Workforce Council**

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Audience</b>            | All bodies involved in the education fields including unions, local authorities, youth work sector, awarding bodies and national organisations and charities.   |
| <b>Overview</b>            | This document provides a summary of responses and feedback on the proposed registration of youth workers with the Education Workforce Council from 1 April 2017.  |
| <b>Action required</b>     | None – for information only.  |
| <b>Further information</b> | Enquiries about this document should be directed to:<br>Practitioner Standards and Professional Development Division<br>School Standards and Workforce Directorate<br>Welsh Government<br>Cathays Park<br>Cardiff<br>CF10 3NQ<br>e-mail: <a href="mailto:ewc.enquiries@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK">ewc.enquiries@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK</a> |
| <b>Additional copies</b>   | This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at <a href="http://www.wales.gov.uk/consultations">www.wales.gov.uk/consultations</a> .   |

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## **Background**

The Education (Wales) Act 2014 (the 2014 Act) reconfigured and renamed the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW); extending the remit of the body; and the composition of its membership in order for it to become the Education Workforce Council (“the Council”). This took place on 1 April 2015, which was also the point at which the requirement for professional registration was extended to Further Education (FE) teachers, in addition to school teachers. From April 2016 registration is extended to school/FE learning support workers.

The Welsh Government initially identified professions required to register with the Council (under Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act), but did not preclude the future registration of other groups such as Youth Workers and Work Based Learning practitioners; who also provide a valuable contribution to the education and training of our children and young people.

The 2014 Act creates a framework that enables the Welsh Government to add new categories of registration, if and when appropriate; and subject to the agreement of the National Assembly for Wales.

It is proposed that, from April 2017, in order to work in aspects of Youth Work in Wales, a person must be registered with the Council. This consultation invited comments on Welsh Governments proposals for the registration of Youth Workers in Wales.

## The consultation

The consultation was circulated across a number of key sectors using a range of networks.

47 written responses to the consultation were received.

The responses were received from the following sectors

| <b>Respondent</b>                    | <b>Number of responses</b> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Awarding Bodies                      | 3                          |
| Unions                               | 6                          |
| Universities and Colleges            | 3                          |
| Local Authorities                    | 13                         |
| National Organisations and Charities | 13                         |
| Voluntary Organisations              | 5                          |
| Individuals                          | 4                          |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>47</b>                  |

This document sets out the result of the consultation structured around the responses to each question. It does not aim to capture every point raised by respondents, but rather highlights the key issues and themes. A list of respondents along with responses can be seen in the attached Annex.

# Summary of responses

## Question 1

*Do you agree that widening professional registration to include the Youth Worker sector would contribute to improving the quality of service provided to young people in Wales?*

### Consultation response:

We received 47 responses to this question, the majority of respondents (34) agreed that the proposal to register youth workers would contribute to an improvement in the quality of services to young people, 7 respondents did not agree; and 6 either did not respond or did not give a definitive answer.

From those 34 positive responses, a significant number were from youth workers both working within local authorities and other organisations. As with the 2012 consultation, there continues to be an appetite for registration, which is viewed as a positive step. They cited greater recognition for those within the sector, an enhancement of status and quality of services delivered to young people, ensure professionalism; and additional assurances on an individual's fitness to practice.

The 6 respondents that did not agree raised the following concerns:

- there were worries that organisations may request a JNC qualified youth worker where one was not required which could negatively impact on the voluntary sector;
- the use of qualifications to define a 'professional youth worker' would discriminate against those who have built up experience in the field; and
- there were also responses from religious organisations which called for church based youth workers to be exempt from registration.

The respondents made the following comments to this question:

- Yes, I agree with the proposal as I believe it will enhance the professional status of Youth Work and thus enable workers to continue to deliver in a range of settings both formal and non-formal.
- At a philosophical level this is a 'no brainer'. Young people deserve professionally/valued and qualified workers.
- I feel that registration will help to underpin regulation; standardisation; accountability and professional identity of the profession and thus would contribute to improving the quality of service. The profession may also become more attractive to a wider group of professionals.

- The Education and Training Standards Committee (ETS) is confident that registration is as positive move to securing the quality of service to young people in Wales.
- I envisage organisations requesting JNC youth worker where they really wouldn't be necessary, and vice-versa. I see this leading to a two tier system of provision that would have a detrimental impact on young people and the opportunities afforded to them.
- Because there may be/is plenty of 'quality' outside of qualifications.
- Christian youth workers are involved in teaching Christian beliefs and the idea that every qualified youth worker should have to register to a secular body to access their religious function is inappropriate and contrary to human rights law.

## Question 2

*Do you agree that registration of the two roles (as set out in paragraph 6.2) in the first instance, will ensure the quality and professionalism of individuals employed as youth workers and protect their title and status?*

### Consultation response

We received 47 responses to this question, the greatest number of respondents (32) agreed that registration will ensure the quality and professionalism of individuals, a small number (9) did not agree, whilst the remaining respondents (6) did not respond or did not give a definitive answer.

From the 32 positive responses, the majority were from youth workers/youth services who feel that registration will protect the title of "youth worker", and that professionalism will ensure quality of service. There was also a call from youth workers/ youth services for the requirement to be extended to the voluntary sector. However, they acknowledged that those with the relevant qualifications could register voluntarily; and that further registration requirements had not been ruled out.

From the small number that didn't agree with our proposals, the main concerns were that more work was needed on the definition of a youth worker as there were many roles and responsibilities that fell under this title. Some respondents felt that youth workers were not a natural fit within the remit of the EWC, and this could have a detrimental effect of the body. Whilst, some from the voluntary sector felt that this would further exclude these practitioners as qualifications would take precedence over experience and ability to do the job.

The respondents made the following comments to this question:

- In relation to the protection of title and status, providing the opportunities afforded by the EWC are universally accessible to all registrants, the PYOG is

confident that this will be a key function in the process.

- ETS agrees that the two categories of youth worker/youth support worker set out in paragraph 6.2 of the consultation document are the appropriate categories for registration.
- Traditionally youth work sits within the wider formal to non formal education spectrum, but generally operates outside of the education provided through formal schooling. Registration with the EWC may assist the greater inclusion of youth work and youth workers in formal education settings, to the benefit of learners, through the increased recognition of youth work as an effective method of education.
- The Catholic Education Service agrees that defining the two levels of competence and status, as determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, ensures that national standards and rates of pay are applied consistently in Wales. They also provide a clear progression route for professional development.
- This will devalue many experienced staff who may have life experiences and a lot to bring to the role, although not be formally qualified. Within the voluntary sector we do not work to JNC (as unable to pay this rate on going). Implications are that organisations will be unable to gain contracts for work within the Education sector and whilst some staff may have degree qualifications these may not be within Youth & Community.
- UCAC feels that the inclusion of this group of workers as members of the Education Workforce Council is expending the membership of the body a step too far, and makes it harder to maintain appropriate focus on the priorities of the education workforce. It could, therefore be harmful to the Education Workforce Council itself and its credibility.

### **Question 3**

*We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.*

#### **Consultation response**

This final question was not designed to solicit an answer, but allowed respondents to record their general thoughts and comments. From the 47 responses received, only 27 respondents provided comments and the responses covered a range of issues.

Some respondents used this question to reinforce that registration will mean that youth workers will be treated as fellow professionals, enhancing their status and quality of service. Respondents were happy that the role of the voluntary sector was recognised in the development of these proposals, but stand firm that volunteers are exempt from mandatory registration – so not to destabilise that sector.

There were a few responses from Church organisations which have been raised in light of another consultation on out-of-school education settings. They stand firm in the belief that the state has no power to regulate church teaching or police church youth work. They state that this would be a breach of legislation enshrined in the Magna Carta, and that churches already comply with safeguarding requirements; and these measures are unnecessary.

Some new issues were raised in respect of ring fenced funding and the establishment of a National Youth Service, these were from voluntary based organisations that fear for their own survival.

There were also a number of issues which had been raised during previous consultation such as registration fees and EWC membership. These are outside the scope of this consultation; however, the youth work sector did comment when these issues were consulted upon and were largely supportive. There will be a further opportunity to comment on registration fees when the Welsh Government consults later this year on a new fee model for 2017.

The respondents made the following comments to this question:

- Youth worker positions are being cut and our professional identity is misunderstood. I believe that being part of this register will help reinstate our identity and will be a positive step forward for the young people of tomorrow.
- I do agree and think we do need to be protecting the title of youth workers and youth work profession may then have a more serious status. It is as in other services apparent that there are workers who may be doing the job for the money which does need to be addressed and would be if registration was introduced however what incentive would be offered to a contracted 3 hour a week worker from the registration.
- The principle that the state should not interfere in church teaching is enshrined in legislation back to the Magna Carta. It is for other branches of youth work to decide whether they wish to be regulated by the state in the way proposed. On behalf of Christians and churches in Wales we suggest three possible solutions:
  - i. The proposals are dropped
  - ii. All youth workers in the voluntary and charitable sector are excluded; or
  - iii. All youth workers in churches or any charity with a religious charitable objective are excluded from the need to register and be regulated by the EWC.
- The reality is the council run youth services are more likely to be able to provide work force development for their workers. This then creates a situation where an organisation such as mine could be called 'unprofessional'. This would be of huge detriment in bidding for contracts and applying for grants. If funds and suitable courses are created for a parity of education and work force development opportunities between the two sectors then it would be reasonable to expect an organisation to have 'professionals' or people

working towards it. Here we are again at a national youth work agency and ring fenced funding.

- This is an appropriate step, however we would not wish to see this extended to cover volunteers, who may be involved for a very small number of hours, and are not in receipt of financial remuneration. Any step in this direction could cause a significant reduction in the quantity and variety of activities on offer to young people.
- How will professional qualification be protected in the current climate when JNC terms and conditions are being rejected by employers- separation of qualification from terms and conditions is needed.