Quality and Standards in Education and Training in Wales

A Re-inspection Report on the Quality of Youth Support Services in Powys

March 2007

by

Estyn, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
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- secondary schools;
- special schools;
- pupil referral units;
- independent schools;
- further education;
- adult community-based learning;
- youth support services;
- youth and community work training;
- LEAs;
- teacher education and training;
- work-based learning;
- careers companies;
- offender learning; and
- the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre plus.

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Introduction

The Powys Young People's Partnership was inspected in May 2005. In the inspection, the grades awarded for Key Question 3 ‘How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of young people and the wider community’, and Key Question 5 ‘How effective are leadership and strategic management’, were both Grade 4, some good features, but shortcomings in important areas. This means both these Key Questions fell below the quality threshold which is set at Grade 3.

As a result of the grades for Key Questions 3 and 5 falling below the quality threshold, a re-inspection took place from 13 to 15 March 2007. A team of inspectors from Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the Welsh Assembly Government, undertook the inspection. The team also included two additional inspectors.

The arrangements for the re-inspection of Key Questions 3 and 5 are set out in the ‘Guidance for the Inspection of Youth Support Services’, which is available on the Estyn website www.estyn.gov.uk.

The re-inspection report includes an evaluation and comment on the provider’s progress in meeting the recommendations from the last inspection and a re-grading of Key Questions 3 and 5.

Grade descriptors

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1: good with outstanding features
Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4: some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5: many important shortcomings
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Context

The area

1 Powys is the largest county in Wales, covering approximately 25% of the landmass. The county is the most sparsely populated in Wales, with only an average of 25 people per square kilometre. The overall population in Powys is steadily growing, while the 16-24 year old population is declining, caused by out-migration by young people. About 50% of the county’s population live in the 18 small ‘towns’; the remainder live in scattered villages or isolated farms. Young people in Powys cite rural isolation as an issue of concern to themselves.

2 Geographical size and population density combine to make Powys the most rural county in Wales. There are no motorways, and no general hospitals, in the county. Many people travel out of Powys for specialist health care, shopping and leisure facilities. The index of multiple deprivation shows Powys to be one of the most deprived counties in Wales in terms of access to services.

3 In Powys, 20.8% of the total population speak Welsh. Thirty-six percent of young people aged 11-25 speak Welsh. The majority of Welsh speakers live in the north-west and south-west of the county.

Partnership arrangements for youth support services

4 In April 2006 the local authority decided that the Executive Director: People Services would be the Lead Director for Children and Young People’s Services. The Lead Director has the overall responsibility for the creation of the Children and Young People’s Plan.

5 In February 2007 the strategic co-ordination of youth support services moved to a new partnership called the Children and Young People’s Partnership. The role of this partnership is to provide the main strategic drive for all children and young people’s services in Powys. The Partnership takes the lead for one of the four major themes of the Community Strategy co-ordinated by the Chief Executives’ group. The Schools and Lifelong Learning Planning Group do the operational level planning for youth support services.

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1 Most of these ‘towns’ have a population of 3,000 which would be classed as a village elsewhere.

2 The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation measures deprivation across a range of seven distinct indicators. These are, income; employment; health; education; skills and training; housing; physical environment; and geographical access to services.

3 The membership of this group is: the chief executives of Powys County Council, the Local Health Board, the Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations and the senior ranking Police officer for Powys
Outcomes of the re-inspection March 2007

Table of grades awarded for the re-inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Question</th>
<th>Inspection grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 How well do learning experiences meet the needs and interests of young</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>people and the wider community?</td>
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<td>5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?</td>
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Summary

The quality of education and training

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of young people and the wider community?

Grade 4: Some good features but shortcomings in important areas

6 Although the Young People’s Partnership has made good progress in improving young people’s access to high quality youth support services, this progress is not yet enough to give all young people in Powys access to their entitlements.

7 The Young People’s Partnership has undertaken an in-depth audit of youth support services and young people’s needs in their area. The outcomes of this audit have helped it to prioritise developments for the future. However, some of the data used in the audit is out of date. As a consequence the audit is not accurate enough. From this audit, the Young People’s Partnership has also produced a useful bilingual directory of services. This directory provides up-to-date information for young people across the county. The work of the local authority’s participation unit has made an important contribution to improving consultation with young people by the local authority, the Young People’s Partnership and its partners. The work of Tros Gynnal has also helped to include more young people from under-represented groups. As a result, opportunities for all young people to take part in decision making have increased. The provision of Welsh-medium and bilingual service remains poor. Provision for young people through joint work between the YOT and the local authority education services has not improved. There is still no educational specialist within the YOT. This means, an education specialist does not inform the assessment of young offenders’ educational needs by the YOT. The lack of clear protocols between the education department and the YOT has delayed progress in these recommendations.

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective is leadership and strategic management?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

8 The local authority, the Local Health Board, and the Police share a challenging vision for children and young people’s services in Powys. This vision informs the drive for change within the Young People’s Partnership. Members of the Young People’s Partnership now have the appropriate seniority to make decisions about resources and to influence planning at service level. There are a very few important partners who still do not regularly attend. This means these partners do not contribute effectively to the development of priorities, and their work is not well co-ordinated with that of other providers. Most partnership sub-groups appropriately focus their work on the key tasks for achieving priorities. A minority of these sub-groups have not made sufficient progress in their work. The Young People’s Partnership’s
monitoring arrangements identify quickly where planned actions have slipped. However, these arrangements are not robust enough to make sure that all working groups complete planned actions within agreed timescales. Communication across the Partnership and with constituent groups is good. All partners have a clear understanding of their responsibilities as representatives, but there is currently no way to ensure all partners carry these out effectively.

**Progress against the recommendations from the 2005 inspection**

9. The Young People's Partnership regularly monitors its performance against the post-Estyn inspection action plan well. Although the Partnership knows when its targets slip, there is no effective mechanism in place to help individual partners and working groups to address this. As a result progress is slow against some priorities.

10. The Young People's Partnership has made adequate progress overall against the recommendations from the Estyn inspection in 2005. Although there has been good progress against 11 recommendations, there has been adequate progress against two recommendations and poor progress against four recommendations.

11. The following evaluation judges the Partnership’s progress in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R1</th>
<th>Raise aspirations for higher levels of attainment among young people, service providers and workers</th>
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12. Individual youth support services have made good progress in addressing this recommendation. More young people now take part in education, training and employment. A few providers are keeping better track of young people and their progress. Workers have better access to training which helps them support young people’s engagement in education training and employment. However the YOT is still failing to meet its targets for young people’s achievements. Overall the Young People's Partnership still does not know enough about the attainment levels of all young people in Powys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R2</th>
<th>Make sure that service providers, workers and young people work together to set high standards of behaviour and that the impact of poor behaviour on others is recognised</th>
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</table>

13. The Young People's Partnership and individual youth support services have made good progress in addressing this recommendation. The Partnership’s charter of entitlement and code of conduct clearly outlines the rights and responsibilities of both young people and staff in providing and using services. Workers have better access to training in behaviour and anger management, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence and safe restraint. Young people are more involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of behaviour policies. However, just over half of the youth support services do not yet involve young people in the planning and monitoring of these policies.
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R3 Increase the contribution of young people to planning, managing, and assessing all types of work across the Partnership

14 The Young People’s Partnership and individual youth support services have made adequate progress in addressing this recommendation. Too many youth support services do not routinely involve young people enough in the planning, management and monitoring of activities and services.

R4 Make sure that young people delivering peer education or peer support, understand the messages that they give and that they have the skills necessary to refer other young people to specialist services appropriately

15 The Young People’s Partnership has made good progress in addressing this recommendation. The Healthy Schools Steering Group and the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator quality assure peer education programmes. There is better training for the teachers, nurses and young people who deliver these programmes in place. Only programmes and materials approved by the steering group are used in the delivery of peer education.

R5 Improve the provision of training across the Partnership, to ensure that all workers know how their work contributes to the Extending Entitlement agenda, and how to integrate the entitlements of young people into their work effectively

16 The Young People’s Partnership has made good progress in addressing this recommendation. The new multi-agency training forum has improved the provision of training across the Partnership. This has led to more joint training, with an increased integration of the Extending Entitlement agenda into the work of all partner organisations. However the Partnership has made limited progress in undertaking a full training needs audit. Without this audit, the Young People’s Partnership cannot target its training for the continued improvement of service delivery.

R6 Extend the range of opportunities for young people to improve their Welsh language skills by increasing the number of bilingual activities for them to take part in, and by enabling them to receive services in the language of their choice

17 The Young People’s Partnership has made poor progress in addressing this recommendation. It has given low priority to this recommendation. In addition, the Partnership does not have a member with responsibility for Welsh-medium and bilingual youth support services.

R7 Map and plan for sufficient youth support services for all those young people who reside in Powys and identify where there are gaps in the range of provision, its location, accessibility and current take up

18 The Young People’s Partnership has made good progress in addressing this recommendation. The Partnership has consulted well with parents, carers, young people and youth support services to map out current provision. The Partnership has
transferred much of this data onto a specialised ICT mapping programme to identify
gaps in coverage. This has led to a comprehensive audit of need, which the
Partnership has used to inform its priorities, and those of its working groups.
However a few of the demographic and attainment data sets are out of date, and
therefore the audit is not accurate enough to identify current needs securely.

**R8** Monitor the take-up of all services by young people from minority
groups, and monitor all racist and bullying incidents, in order to ensure
equality of opportunities for all young people in Powys

19 The Young People's Partnership has made adequate progress in addressing this
recommendation. The local authority has an established programme of Equality
Impact Assessments\(^4\) for all of its services. This programme helps the local authority
self-assess how accessible its services are to minority groups. A minority of youth
support services regularly monitor the take up of services by young people for their
own management purposes. Otherwise, the Partnership has been slow to put in
place a process for monitoring the take up of all youth support service by young
people. It has only recently distributed a draft monitoring form to all partners for
piloting from April 2007. This form clearly records the ethnicity, disability and
language requirements of all service users, and all racist and bullying incidents. The
full-year data from this pilot will not be available until March 2008.

**R9** Increase joint working to provide school-aged young people involved in
the youth justice system, with suitable full-time education provision

20 The Young People's Partnership and its individual partners have made poor progress
in addressing this recommendation. The Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the local
authority education service are not clear about their responsibilities for the
educational support for young people involved in the youth justice system. The lack
of clear protocols between the education department and the YOT has delayed
progress in these recommendations.

**R10** Make sure that young people are able to receive their entitlement to
specialist help, information and careers guidance, in places and at times
convenient to them

21 The Young People's Partnership and individual youth support services have made
good progress in addressing this recommendation. The Partnership has consulted
well with young people through the county youth forum, in order to improve their
knowledge about young people’s information and careers guidance needs. As a
consequence, Careers Wales have improved the opportunities for young people to
access careers advice and guidance. They have achieved this through targeted
training of workers from voluntary organisations, to NVQ level 2 in information and
advice. The local authority youth service has increased its mobile outreach and
information services to young people living in rural communities.

\(^4\) Equality Impact Assessments seek to determine the impact of policies on different parts of the
population along nine different dimensions, age, gender, religion, political affiliation, marital status,
dependants, sexual orientation, disability, and ethnicity
22 The Young People's Partnership and individual youth support services have made good progress in addressing this recommendation. Many workers have attended appropriate training in child protection. The local authority requires all groups who receive Cymorth or local authority funding, and those who use its buildings, to have a child protection policy, and to ensure all adults working with children are Criminal Records Bureau checked. The Young People's Partnership has widely distributed the NSPCC\textsuperscript{5} pack 'First Check', to help organisations improve their policies and practice relating to safeguarding children. Although there has been good progress, the Young People's Partnership does not have a way of checking the quality of all partners' policies and working practices for safeguarding children and young people. It is therefore unable to ensure polices and practices are fit for purpose.

23 The Young People's Partnership and its partners have made good progress in addressing this recommendation. The local authority and its partners have agreed a challenging vision for the new Children and Young People’s Partnership in the delivery of integrated children's services. This vision informs partnership planning. Communication across the Partnership has improved. The Partnership co-ordinator sends regular briefing papers to all partners, which give clear update reports about the progress of the Partnership’s work. The Partnership’s monitoring of action plans is improving, but it is still not robust enough. Although the Partnership knows when it has not achieved its action plan targets, there is no mechanism in place to ensure partners and sub-groups get back on track.

24 The local authority and its partners have made good progress in addressing this recommendation. The Chief Executive's group co-ordinates the work across all strategic partnerships. The new Children and Young People's Partnership structure is simpler, and its sub-groups have clear terms of reference. Representatives attending the Young People's Partnership have the seniority to make financial commitments and influence strategic plans. Sub-group agendas focus on key tasks, and they report their progress regularly to the Young People's Partnership.

\textsuperscript{5} National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is a UK charity working to promote child protection and stop cruelty to children
R14 Develop an overriding quality assurance framework, which encompasses all Partnership activities, measures the impact of service provision upon young people, and ensures that the quality assurance procedures of all individual partners are of a high standard

The Young People's Partnership and its partners have made poor progress in addressing this recommendation. Progress against this recommendation has been too slow. The Young People's Partnership has undertaken an audit of quality assurance systems used by youth support services in their area. The majority of partners do not involve young people in their self-assessment and quality assurance processes. The Partnership has not used the data from the audit to identify and share good practice very well. It has produced a draft quality framework for partners to use, but this does not focus enough on the quality of outcomes for young people.

R15 Improve consultation processes to include better representation of the views of under-represented groups of young people, including disabled learners and pupils from special schools and independent sector schools

The Young People's Partnership and its partners have made good progress in addressing this recommendation. The opportunities for young people to take part in decision making through consultation have increased. The local authority’s participation unit is effective. This unit has developed many innovative ways to consult with young people and to increase their contribution to planning. Tros Gynnal\(^6\) helps under-represented groups to engage better with service providers and the work of the participation unit. These groups include disabled young people, children on the child protection register, permanently excluded pupils and looked after children\(^7\). The work of the county youth forum has improved through better links with school councils. However, the county youth forum does not routinely include other well established youth forums.

R16 Undertake a detailed analysis of all the resources available within the Partnership, and use this data to continue to monitor their effective and efficient use

The Young People's Partnership and its partners have made poor progress in addressing this recommendation. Although the Partnership has undertaken a mapping of resources, partners are slow in returning information, and the quality of some responses is poor. The Young People’s Partnership has not convinced all partners of the importance of a detailed analysis of resources for the planning of services to young people.

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6 Tros Gynnal is a Welsh charity working with vulnerable young people by providing advocacy, mediation and intervention support

7 These are children for whom the local authority has legal parental responsibility. The term refers to all children who are subject to a care order, or who are provided with accommodation on a voluntary basis for more than 24 hours.
R17 Review those factors that contribute to the low recruitment and retention of staff in youth support services, and develop an action plan to redress them

28 The Young People’s Partnership and its partners have made good progress in addressing this recommendation. The local authority, Local Health Board and Police have developed a joint recruitment and workforce development plan. The local authority has improved its pay and conditions for its youth service workers, which has resulted in a significant reduction in the vacancy rate from 20.4% to 7%. The local authority has also increased staffing levels in children’s services. There still remains understaffing in some areas, such as specialist health services.
Recommendations

29 In order to improve the areas re-inspected, the local authority, the new Children and Young People’s Partnership and its members need to:

R1 develop performance management processes that enable the Partnership, its sub-groups and partners to complete all planned actions, to achieve the objectives set in the Estyn post-inspection action plan, within the agreed timescales; and

R2 improve the way the Partnership gathers and uses data, to ensure it has complete and up-to-date information in order to better plan for improvements and monitor the quality of the work of youth support services in Powys.
Partnership’s response to the report findings

The Children and Young People’s Partnership in Powys has considered this report and accepts the findings as accurate. It accepts progress has not been at a level to achieve the performance it aspires too within a reasonable timeframe. In preparation for the full implementation of the 2004 Children Act a major structuring has been completed which we believe leaves the Partnership much better placed to achieve enhanced performance and meet our strategic objectives.

Overall leadership has been transferred to a new Head of Service based within a portfolio Group which leads all services for Children and Young People within the Council. A new Senior Partnership Manager has been recruited to lead a reconfigured support team.

The lead responsibility for developing an action plan to address the recommendations given in this report and the identified areas of weakness will be given to a new Schools and Lifelong Learning Planning Group who have assumed the responsibilities of the previous YPP. This group will then ensure implementation of the action plan and monitor progress.

Progress will be reported to the Children and Young People’s Partnership Officer Group and the Partnership on a regular basis.

The two recommendations made by Estyn are issues, which the Children and Young People’s Partnership have already identified as crucial areas for development and work in these areas will be carried out across the whole Partnership structure and not just for the YPP.

The Children and Young People’s Partnership will develop robust monitoring and performance management systems alongside its Children and Young People’s Plan. These will inform progress against both Local and National objectives.

Powys has a clear and challenging vision for children and young people’s services based on a model that integrates the work of agencies and targets appropriate age groups in their local communities. The commitment from all key agencies to this vision will support greater efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery leading to improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The ongoing work to ensure that the voices of children, young people and their families are heard in service planning and decision-making will be a fundamental building block within the new regime and will lead to services that are more effective in meeting both individual and collective needs.
Appendix 1

The evidence base of the re-inspection

A team of inspectors visited the Powys Young People’s Partnership for three days in March 2007. Members of the inspection team met chief officers, elected members, voluntary sector representatives, workers employed in youth support services and young people. The inspection team scrutinised:

- the Young People’s Partnership’s self-assessment report;
- documentation made available by the Partnership itself; and
- documentation made available by individual youth support services providers.
### Appendix 2

#### The inspection team

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<tr>
<td>Gerard Kerslake HMI</td>
<td>Reporting Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsan O’Connor HMI</td>
<td>Team Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jassa Scott HMI</td>
<td>Team Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Jones</td>
<td>Additional Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ani Sutton</td>
<td>Additional Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelley Davies</td>
<td>Provider nominee</td>
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