



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

## **Report:**

**Analysis of responses to the consultation on Estyn's  
inspection arrangements for youth services from 2024**

June 2023

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Methodology</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Respondents profile</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>4. Results</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>4.1 Youth Work Inspection</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>4.2 Inspection reporting</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4.3 Impact of proposals</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>4.4 Potential follow-up</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>5. Next Steps</b> .....	<b>8</b>

# Responses to the consultation on Estyn's inspection arrangements for youth services from 2024

## 1. Introduction

In summer 2023, we conducted a public consultation on our inspection arrangements for youth services. This was to ensure that stakeholders views are built into how we approach inspection from 2024 onwards.

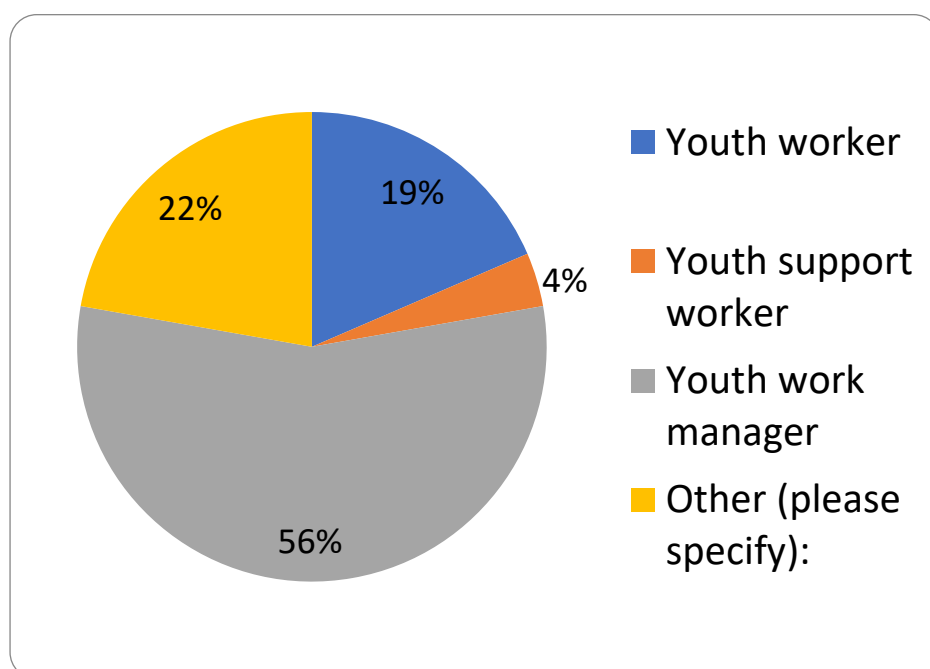
## 2. Methodology

The consultation took the form of a survey that was available to complete either online or offline (a Word document to be completed and returned via e-mail or post). We launched the survey on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023, and it closed on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

## 3. Respondents profile

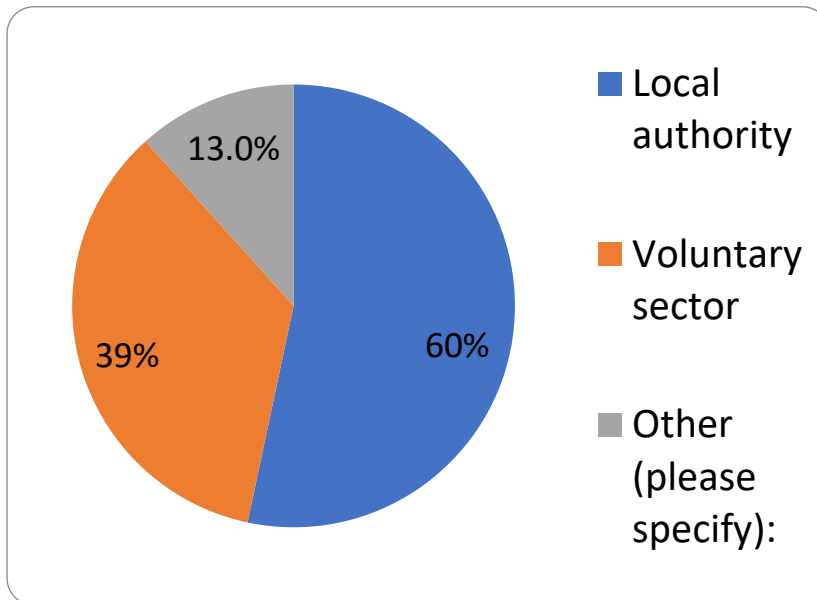
We received a total of 56 responses to the consultation (profile in figure 1). Of those that responded 'other', these included representation from wider sectors (2 academics, 2 youth work training providers, 2 trustees and directors of youth charities, a parent, strategic youth work support officer, 2 local authority heads of service, Duke of Edinburgh manager and national youth policy).

**Figure 1: Please choose one option below which best describes the capacity in which you are completing this questionnaire.**



We asked respondents which area of youth work they were most interested or employed in. Respondents were able to select all areas which applied to them, so percentages for this question do not sum to 100. Of the responses, 60% responded as 'Local Authority', 39% 'Voluntary Sector' and 13% as 'Other' (Including EWC, both local authority and voluntary sector, education, HEI, quality review and monitoring, partnership with voluntary sector, youth work training)

**Figure 2: Which area of youth work are you most interested or employed in?**



Answered: 54 Skipped: 2

Of the respondents that indicated that they belonged to an organisation, these included:

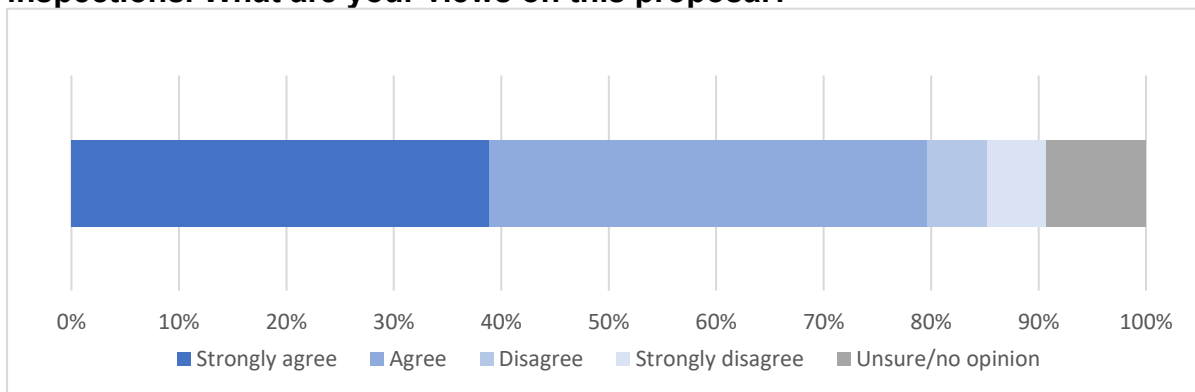
- 8 Local government
- 7 Third sector youth services organisations

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Youth Work Inspection

Firstly, we asked respondents what their views were on the proposal that youth work inspections should be stand-alone inspections. Eighty per cent of respondents either strongly agreed (39%) or agreed (41%) with the proposal and twelve per cent either disagreed (6%) or strongly disagreed (6%). Nine per cent of respondents were unsure or had no opinion.

**Figure 3: We propose that youth work inspections should be stand-alone inspections. What are your views on this proposal?**



Answered: 54 Skipped: 2

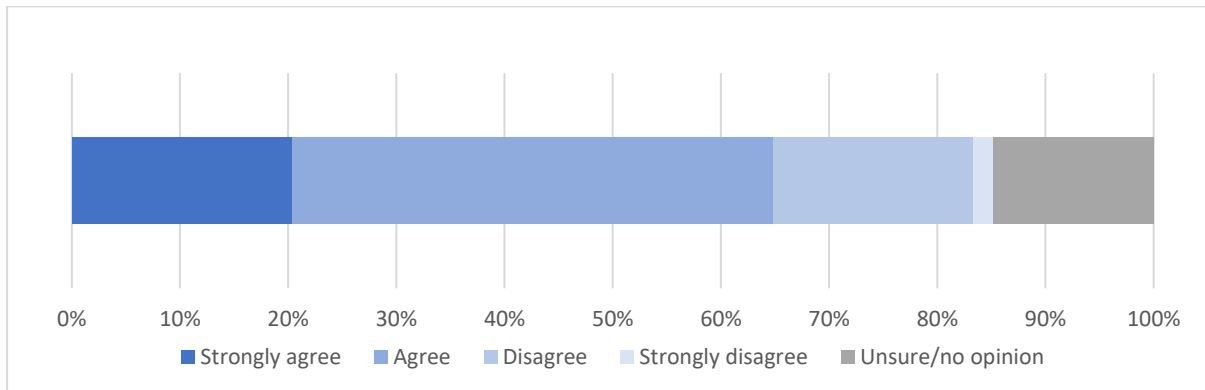
Many respondents felt that stand-alone inspections would give youth work the profile and recognition it deserves – which will result both in “increased focus” and will add “validity to the profession”. It will also “enable Senior Leaders and Youth Workers to develop and improve youth work provision for young people” and “provide a framework to complement existing structures that direct youth work, for example the Quality Mark and other more local arrangements for governance and improvement”.

Stand-alone inspections will also “raise awareness of the impact and benefits of youth work, in its own right, and not as a subsidiary service to schools which can often be the case in Local Authorities”, they will also help prevent “youth work getting lost in education inspections”.

There were a small number noting concerns that further inspections could lead to more pressure on the workforce and could have a negative impact on young people “by adding further inspections you’re increasing barriers, which will reduce the face-to-face work with young people which is very much needed”.

We then asked about the proposal that the youth inspections should be linked to LGES inspections, so that the evaluations from the youth inspection inform and contribute to the wider LGES inspections. Sixty-four per cent of respondents either strongly agreed (20%) or agreed (44%) with the proposal and twenty one per cent either disagreed (19%) or strongly disagreed (2%). Fifteen per cent of respondents were unsure or had no opinion.

**Figure 4: We also propose that the youth inspections should be linked to LGES inspections so that the evaluations from the youth inspection can inform and contribute to the wider LGES inspections. What are your views about this proposal?**

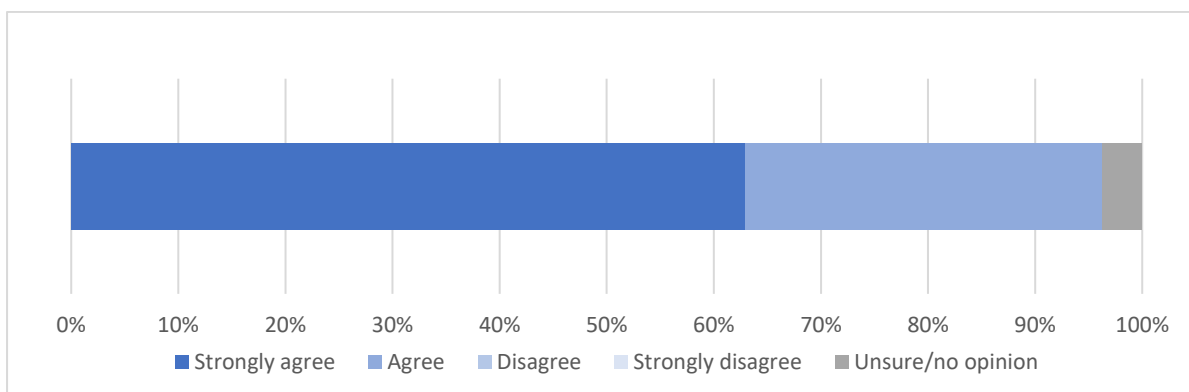


Answered: 54 Skipped: 2

Several respondents felt that “there needs to be some link to the LGES inspections as this will help with consistency in strategic decision making within the local authority.” And that “The young people in an area are generally the same young people involved in both inspections - their needs should be at the forefront of any provisions.”

There were some noting that expertise in youth work would be needed when conducting the inspection as it is a specialised field. There was almost unanimous support for the notion that the inspection framework should reflect the principles and purposes of youth work. Ninety-six per cent of respondents either strongly agreed (63%) or agreed (33%) with the proposal. No one disagreed. Four per cent of respondents were unsure or had no opinion.

**Figure 5: Do you agree that the inspection framework should reflect the principles and purposes of youth work?**



Answered: 54 Skipped: 2

Many respondents felt that the inspection framework should reflect the principles and purposes of youth work, but that other frameworks and standards must also be considered; “The principle and purposes have recently (2022) been updated and are

owned by the sector so are a good point of reference. Any inspection framework should also take into consideration the Youth Work Quality Mark and the National Occupational Standards.”

When asked to consider how should we measure the outcomes in youth work inspection, many responders felt that this was difficult, if not impossible due to the difficulty of “setting universal ‘outcomes’ that can adequately reflect the priorities of young people from different communities; outcomes and priorities which may vary greatly”. Also “Measuring outputs like accreditation and attainment are less meaningful in non-formal education, the distance travelled is of more interest.”

Several solutions to this problem were suggested, including “Rather than ‘outcomes’, ‘indicators’ of impact and value could be derived from existing evidence gathered through typical monitoring documentation and reflective practice notes, including anecdotal observations. There should be no mandatory increase in the administrative load on youth workers” and “The term outcome should be understood not as final outcomes per se but rather indicators of progress along a successful life path.”

Many responders warned of over-focussing on measures and outcomes, for example “There is a danger that this will focus on what can be measured but reduces the service to focusing on those things. Each community and service will have their own priorities”.

We also asked, ‘how should we involve young people in the inspection process?’ Many responders mentioned setting up a “Young person inspection panel” so that they could function “as young people peer-inspectors, but it would be important to find a wide range of suitable young people to reflect the range of young people who are involved with youth work.”

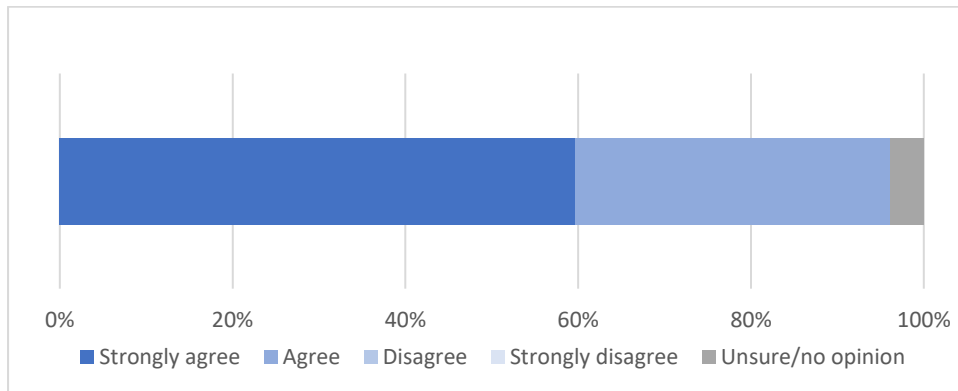
There was also a strong message that young people are key stakeholders and, as such, should be at the heart of everything, including any inspection process.

Other methods of engaging young people in the inspection process were mentioned, including anonymous questionnaires, (informal) interviews and the setting up of a Youth Forum, where young people would be free to express their views openly and honestly.

## **4.2 Inspection reporting**

We asked respondents what their views were on the proposal to train and deploy practitioners as peer inspectors. There was almost unanimous support; ninety-six per cent of respondents either strongly agreed (63%) or agreed (33%) with the proposal. No one disagreed. Four per cent of respondents were unsure or had no opinion.

**Figure 6: Do you agree with our proposal to train and deploy practitioners as peer inspectors?**



Answered: 52 Skipped: 4

The strong support for deploying practitioners as peer inspectors was reflected in the comments. Many responders agreed that “Youth workers understand the sector and have the knowledge required to form judgements on the provision being inspected.”

Although seen as a positive step, some highlighted the importance of ensuring staffing capacity, support and training to undertake the peer inspector role: “You also need to have the willingness of organisations to release staff to be peer inspectors.” It was suggested that practitioners who become peer inspectors would need comprehensive training and support in order to take on the additional responsibilities.

When asked “What kind of inspection report(s) would be useful?” there was a strong theme: “Concise and constructive without being reductive”. The reports must be easy to access (available online), available to all (where possible), easy to read and to understand, and have a clear set of constructive actions – linked to training, where required.

We then asked if our inspection reports should be aimed at youth work professionals and/or young people or other audiences. Almost two thirds of respondents (65%) believed that they should be aimed at **both**. 14% of respondents thought that the reports should be aimed at **youth work practitioners**, with the remainder, 21%, favouring **other audiences**. These ‘other audiences’ included:

- Stakeholders
- Partner Organisations
- Parents

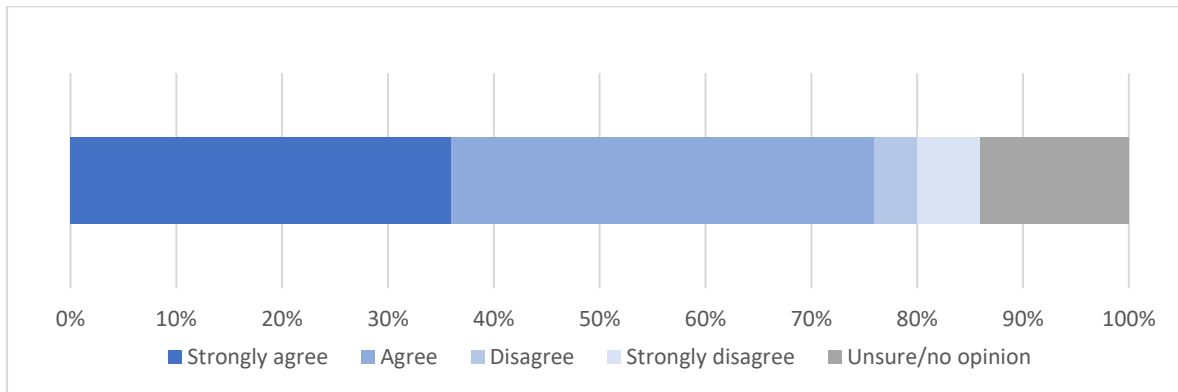
Several responders would like the reports to be made available to the public, as there is a “need to raise the general public awareness of the importance and value of youth work.”

There was strong support for the proposal not to have summative gradings in our inspection reports. Seventy-six per cent of respondents either strongly agreed (36%) or agreed (40%) with the proposal, only ten per cent either disagreed (4%) or



strongly disagreed (6%). Fourteen per cent of respondents were unsure or had no opinion.

**Figure 7: We propose not to have summative gradings in our inspection reports. What is your view about this proposal?**



Answered: 50 Skipped: 6

There was a strong feeling that summative gradings, while sometimes helpful, can “create a climate of anything from fear and despondency to complacency” and that they inevitably result in comparisons being drawn. Often these comparisons are unfair or even wrong as it is “difficult to compare apples and pears.”

The lack of uniformity in the nature of the provision of youth work services makes it very difficult for an effective and fair grading system to be developed.

When asked about other issues, not included in the questions previously asked in the questionnaire, key issues raised include:

- Third Sector – It was felt that this sector is different and should not be part of the same inspection process as the local authorities. There must be consideration to developing specific inspection processes for this sector.
- Recruitment of peer inspectors – Experienced and knowledgeable workers are required for this role.
- Inspections should be done over several ‘visits’, over time, rather than as one-off events.
- There needs to be more consistency and better communication of, terminology, guidelines and timescales.

When respondents were asked to provide feedback on any other aspects of Estyn's inspection arrangements, two key areas were highlighted:

- Collaboration - The inspection process must be done ‘with’ providers, not ‘to’ them. Also, clear direction is needed, prior to inspections taking place, on what will be inspected.
- Staff recruitment - There was a general concern about the lack of people coming into the Youth Work profession and the inevitable knock-on effect this will have on service provision.

### 4.3 Impact of proposals

When asked about the potential impact of the proposals on the Welsh language, several points were raised. These included:

- Currently the quality of the provision of services in Welsh is often lower than that in English. This is predominantly down to a lack of Welsh-speaking practitioners – or at least the inability to always be able to meet the demands in a particular location at a particular point in time.
- It is generally agreed that the proposals should strengthen the provision of services in Welsh as this will, presumably, be something which will form part of the inspection process – this *should* encourage an increase in the provision of services in Welsh: although there will be significant training and support required to realise this.

When asked about the potential impact of the proposals on issues of equality, discrimination, promotion of equality of opportunity and fostering of good relationships between different people the respondents raised the following points:

- As with the impact on the Welsh language, the proposals *should* result in measures relating to equality and diversity being included in the inspection process and, therefore, being given more attention. But again, like in the case of the Welsh language, in order to improve things, there will be a need for training and support.
- Many respondents pointed out that equality and diversity form the backbone of youth work and that these values and attitudes are something that they live and breathe on a daily basis.

### 4.4 Potential follow-up

27 respondents provided contact details and have stated that they would be happy for Estyn to contact them to discuss their feedback.

## 5. Next Steps

The findings of the consultation will help inform the new inspection arrangements for Youth Services from 2024 onwards.