

YOUTH INFORMATION IN WALES

Elise Stewart is the Development Officer for Information Services to Young People at the Wales Youth Agency. Here she gives an update on the latest developments in youth information

Since January 1995 the Wales Youth Agency has formally been working in partnership with the National Youth Agency (NYA) to develop and promote information services for young people. This has taken the form of the *Information Shop for Young People Initiative* and the *10 point NYAFAIS index system*. The Initiative, developed by the NYA towards the end of the eighties and firmly established at the beginning of this decade, aims to provide a co-ordinated national network of youth information provision points. The Shops provide a corporate approach to youth information and aim to establish an environment which is user friendly, encouraging use by all young people.

Why, you might ask, does the Wales Youth Agency need to work in partnership with the National Youth Agency? The simple answer is one of resources and common sense. We have watched with great interest the development of the shops over the last five years, seeing a national initiative become firmly established offering young people the information services they require. We have seen the implementation of high quality standards and the strong collaboration between the information providers and local agencies working for and on behalf of young people.

Whilst keen to develop full information shops, our interest goes beyond their corporate image and considers the success of the widespread flexible use of the NYAFAIS. This is the classification system used by the shops, designed to be directly accessed by young people. This system can be used very cost effectively by any centre or organisation so that even if it is not possible to set up a designated Information Shop, workers can still use the classification system to provide an information base for young people within their own centre.

Registration for use of the system is free of charge, although we ask that workers register themselves as users with the Wales Youth Agency. Support materials, such as box labels and banner signs, are available at a moderate cost. This system allows the smallest most poorly resourced youth provision to offer the same kind of service as the more affluent centres. Already projects throughout Wales, from Glanaman to Aberdare and Caldicot, are seeing the advantages of such a system.

Key to all of this is the central support that can be offered by the Wales Youth Agency and the National Youth Agency.

The Wales Youth Agency is currently developing support materials (in paper and disc formats) for youth workers setting up and working on such projects.

This gives details of information suppliers, and resources for workers to use with young people. The National Youth Agency is currently putting the finishing touches to information in each of the areas identified in the NYAFAIS. Together these resources will offer youth information providers throughout Wales the foundation for well structured information bases. At whatever level - be it UK, Wales, Unitary Authority or local - everybody will be able to work to a similar system in the most effective and efficient way possible. Whilst general information and support details can be gained from central sources, local information can be input at club level. Thus there is no repetition of work and with the ever increasing burdens put on workers' time, the idea of setting up, maintaining and operating such a base does not seem so arduous.

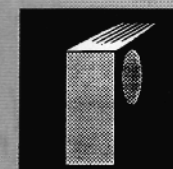
By working together in partnership we are all able to move towards providing young people in Wales with the information services their European counterparts have taken for granted for years. Our young people deserve the best we can offer.

• For further information please contact Elise Stewart at the Wales Youth Agency (address on p.2).

Information Shops for Young People aim to:

- offer young people a focal point for the provision of information on a wide range of issues which affect their lives, for example volunteering; training and employment opportunities; welfare benefits; accommodation; entertainment etc
- encourage young people to maximise the benefits of the wide range of training opportunities available to them and provide some direct training;
- develop opportunities for volunteering;
- provide the help and guidance of information staff accustomed to working with young people;
- actively seek the participation of young people in the planning, management, delivery and evaluation of a personalised service for young people;
- monitor the needs of, and provision for young people in the locality in order to inform the decision making of local and central government.

NYAFAIS - National Youth Agency Focused Access Information Service



EDUCATION



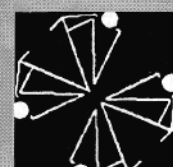
EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING



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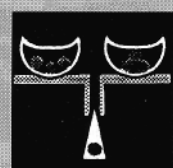
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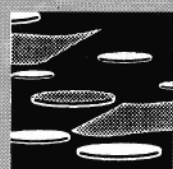
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HOUSING



JUSTICE & EQUALITY



MONEY



SPORT, TRAVEL & LEISURE