



Newsline

occasional papers on issues for youth workers

DRAFT
Results of
Questionnaire Survey
of
Youth Workers
in Wales

DRAFT
Results of
Questionnaire Survey
of
Youth Workers
in Wales

John Rose, March 2003
© Wales Youth Agency
Leslie Court, Lôn y Llyn, Caerphilly CF83 1BQ
Tel: 029 20 855700 Fax: 029 20 855701
This document is also available on our website at www.wya.org.uk

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF YOUTH WORKERS IN WALES

Contents

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY	1
RESULTS.....	2
<i>Age, Gender and Experience</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Hours Worked</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Youth Work Qualifications and Training</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>In-Service Training.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Job Titles</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Location</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Work During Weekends and Holidays.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Time Spent in Direct Contact with Young People.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>19</i>

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF YOUTH WORKERS IN WALES

This paper contains the results of part of a questionnaire survey carried out to determine if the maintained youth service in Wales is able to meet the requirements of government policy and the needs of young people while maintaining its specific organisational identity. Information obtained through the questionnaire was gathered and analysed between 2000 and 2002 a period of time affected in a number of significant ways by devolved government and the setting up of the National Assembly for Wales (1999). From this time the youth service has become subject to greater levels of scrutiny within a political agenda that gives significant attention to improving the contribution of all young people to the economic and social well being of Wales. This was a position reinforced by the conclusions and recommendations of Extending Entitlement (NafW 2000) which became the government's flagship document for the promotion of services to young people.

Questionnaire Survey

The use of a questionnaire was important to the research because demographic information relating to the maintained youth service in Wales has historically been difficult to obtain. To address this deficiency the survey was designed to elicit responses in five broad sections to provide information of direct use in answering the specific question raised by the study. Section one was concerned with the personal characteristics of the respondents including gender, age, experience and employment characteristics including location of employment, work patterns, numbers of hours employed, time spent on face-to face work.

The research design included a pilot phase involving colleagues from the field at managerial, full-time and part-time levels. It was the intention of this consultative process to ensure as far as possible that the final questionnaire was able to ask the 'right' questions in the 'right' way. The questionnaire was completed by **608** respondents, which made it the largest ever survey of youth workers in Wales. This was made possible because the researcher had access, through his employment with the Wales Youth Agency, to a large group of respondents either through personal contact or through the support of the Principal Youth Officers Group. This group gave significant help to the process by distributing the questionnaire through individual Local Authority mailing systems and by promoting the value of the research to the youth service.

The analysis of those who responded to the questionnaire resulted in the following information which is essentially statistical and can be represented most effectively in the form of pie charts, line, graphs, bar charts and tables.

NB. (Some of the figures do not add up to the full sample total because on occasions respondents did not answer all the questions. The results are based on actual answers given measured against the 'total' number of respondents).

The first section of the questionnaire survey was concerned to obtain information about the particularity of those who work in the maintained youth service in Wales. Where appropriate, a comparison of the results is made against the results of Survey 13 (HMSO 1984) the Survey of Youth Workers in Wales (Wales Youth Work Partnership 1990) and the Audit of the Youth Service in England (National Youth Agency 1998). In making these comparisons, conclusions can be drawn about how some characteristics of the maintained youth service has evolved since the HMI Inspection was conducted in 1982.

Results

The respondents were unequally divided by gender with males comprising 41% (249) and females 59% (359) Further analysis of the results indicate that of the 159 workers who identified themselves, as working full-time 57.86% (92) were male, 42.13% (67) were female. Of the 443 part-time workers 69.52% (281) were female and 43.3% (162) were male. The results reveal that the part-time workforce is predominantly female with the full-time workers being predominantly male.

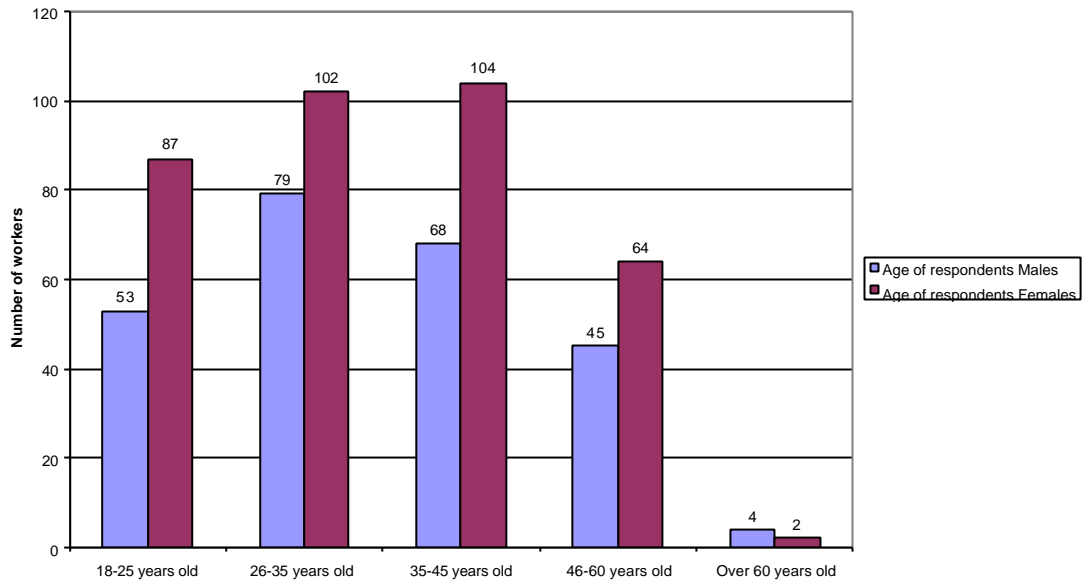
These results show a marked improvement since Survey 13 (HMSO 1984) was published. Of the 165 full-time workers identified at that time 89% (147) were male and only 11% (18) were female. Statistics are not available for the gender balance of part-time workers but comments were made about the difficulties in finding appropriate numbers of male part-time workers.

Age, Gender and Experience

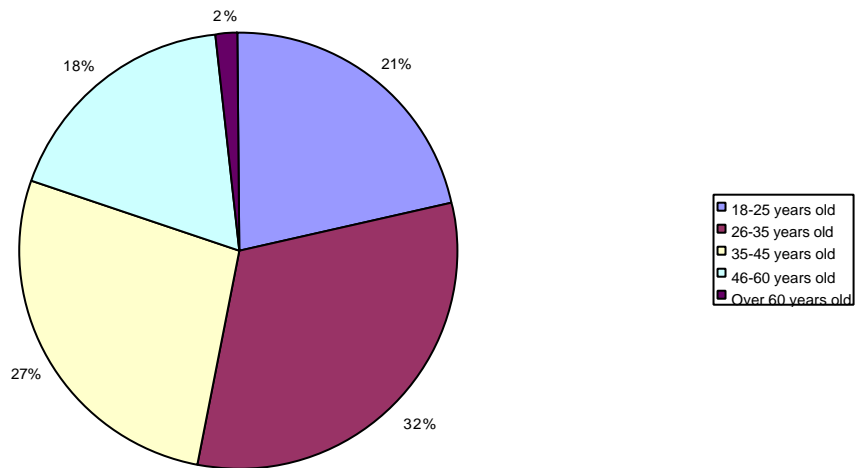
Table 1 Age of Respondents

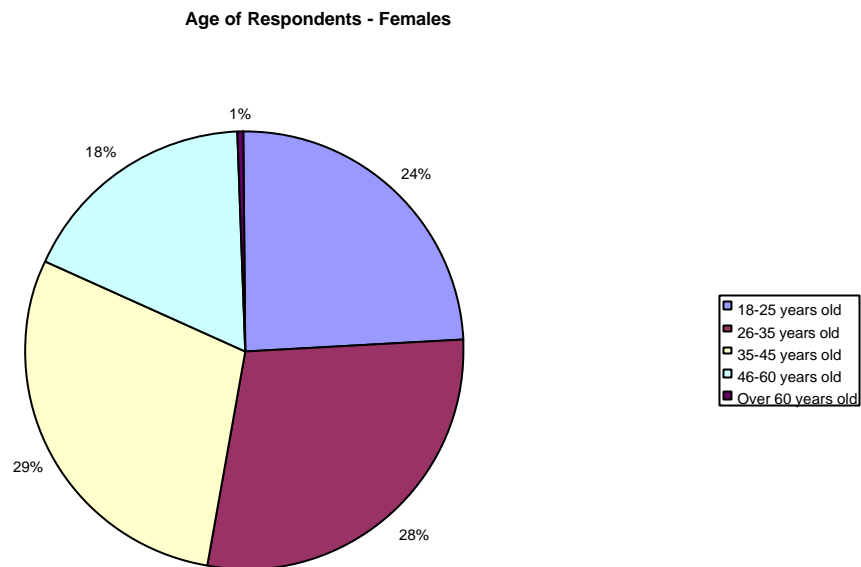
Males	Number	%	Females	Number	%
18-25 years old	53	8.7%	18-25 years old	87	14.3%
26-35 years old	79	13.0%	26-35 years old	102	16.8%
35-45 years old	68	11.2%	35-45 years old	104	17.1%
46-60 years old	45	7.4%	46-60 years old	64	10.5%
Over 60 years old	4	.65%	Over 60 years old	2	.3%
Total	249	41.0%	Total	359	59%

Age of Respondents - Males & Females



Age of Respondents - Males



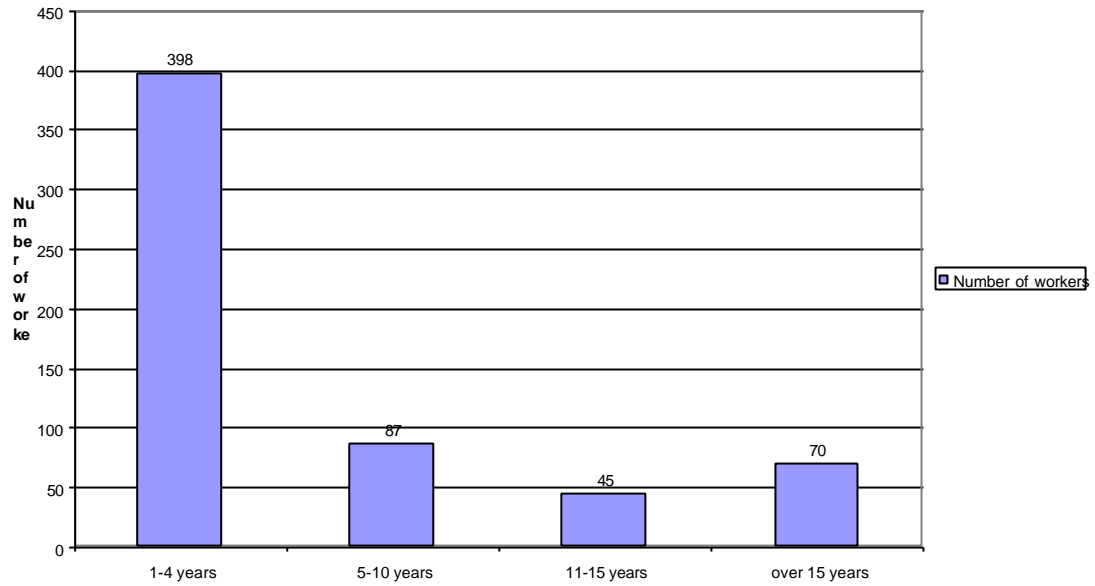


During the period of the survey, the majority of those working in the maintained youth service 52.86% (321) were under the age of 35. Of these 21.7% (132) were male and 31.1% (189) were female. The largest single group, 17.1% (104) were female workers between the age of 35-45 years. The largest single group of male workers 13.0% (79) was aged between 26-35 years. Only .95% (6) respondents were over the age of 60. .65% (4) of these were male and .3% (2) were female. When the age profile is measured against the number of years employed in the maintained youth service, the results describe an organisation young in terms of age and inexperienced in the number of years individuals have been employed. Of the 65.4% (398) workers employed for between 1-4 years 31% (123) are between the ages of 18-25 and 37.4% (149) are aged between 26-35. Eight respondents indicated they had been employed for less than one year. It is interesting to note that 23% (140) of the respondents are themselves of youth service age. This indicates a major shift away from previous recent practice when youth workers were expected to be at least 23 years of age at the time they completed their full-time training programme (WYA 1996). Similar expectations were placed on part-time workers. The reason for this was to ensure that those working with young people had some degree of life experience.

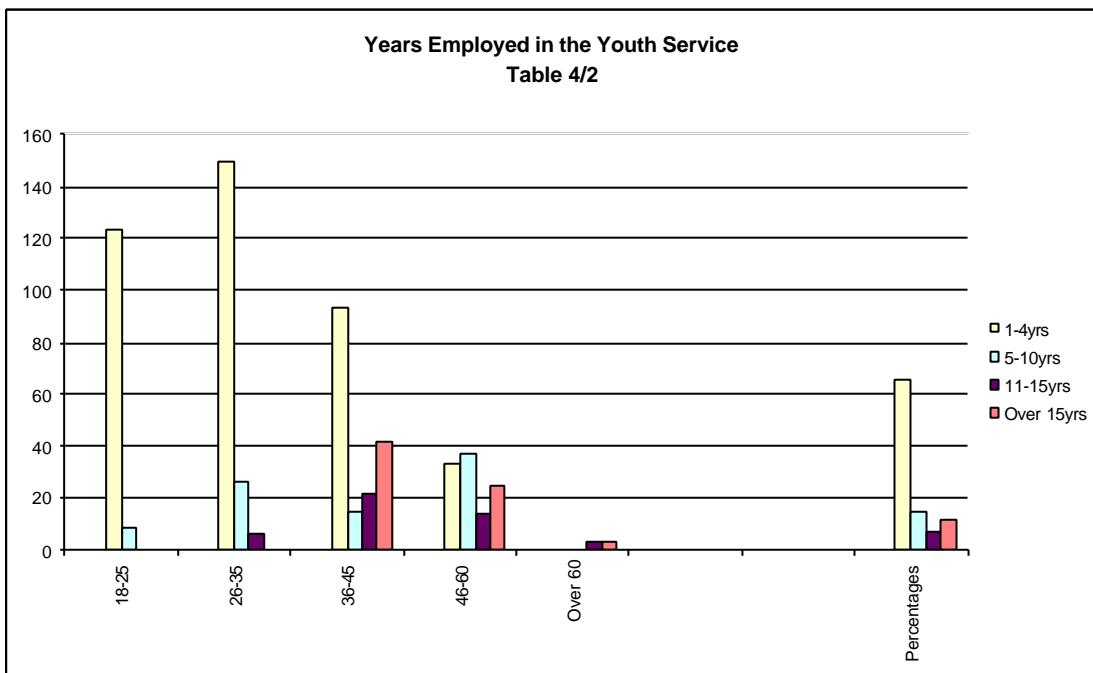
Table 2 Years employed in the Youth Service

Years employed	Number	%	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-60	Over 60
1-4 years	398	65.4%	123	149	93	33	nil
5-10 years	87	14.3%	9	26	15	37	nil
11-15 years	45	7.4%	nil	6	22	14	3
over 15 years	70	11.2%	nil	nil	42	25	3
Total	600	98.3%	132	181	172	109	6

Years Employed in the Youth Service



Years Employed in the Youth Service
Table 4/2



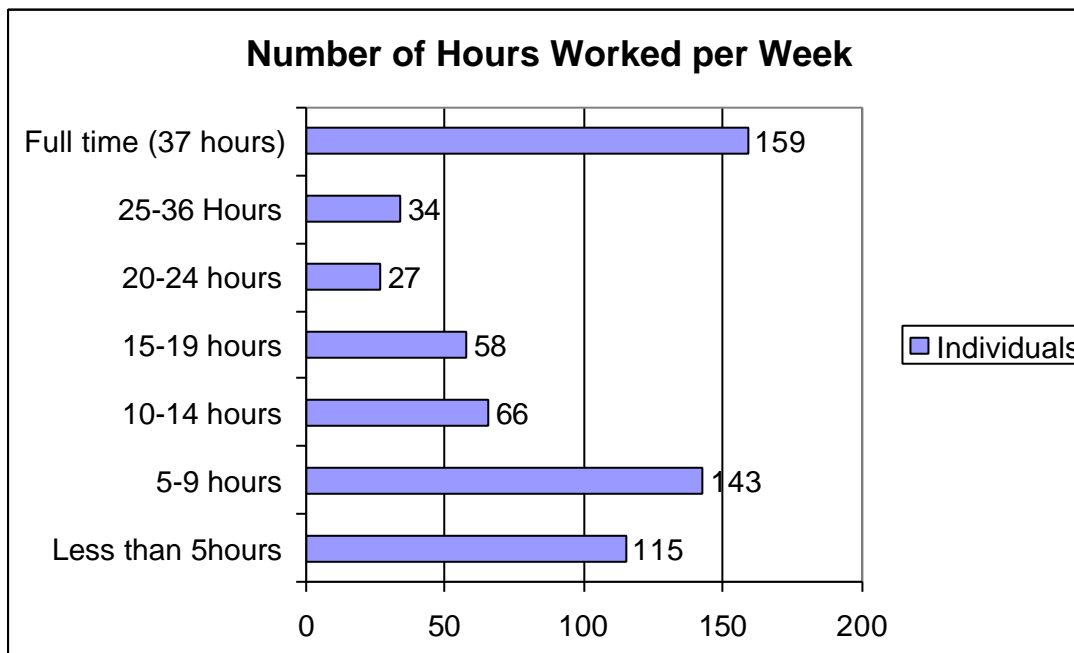
The significant majority 65.4% (398) of those who responded to the questionnaire survey have been employed in the maintained youth service for between one and four years. Further analysis of these figures show that of the 159 full-time workers involved in the questionnaire survey 68.6% (109) have been employed from between 1-4 years, 10.5% (17) for between 5-10 years, 5.7% (9) for between 11-15 years and 15.2% (24) over 15 years. This was not an unexpected result given the increase in paid employment opportunities within the maintained youth service following the political changes in the UK and Wales following the election of New Labour in 1997. This has led to increased budgets for work with young people and thus to enhanced employment opportunities.

The results describe an inexperienced workforce, which has become part of an organisation moving through a period of great change driven as it is by a political agenda emanating from the Welsh Assembly Government. Evidence will be sought elsewhere to determine if these new workers have been appropriately prepared to deliver the new vision of youth work promoted by government. Of particular interest will be the results related to the qualified status of respondents measured against both local and national qualifying levels. Consideration will also be given to the levels of support offered to new workers through in-service training, particularly that offered as Induction.

Hours Worked

Table 3 Number of Hours worked by Individual Respondents per week

No Hours per Week	Number	%
Less than 5hours	115	18.9%
5-9 hours	143	23.5%
10-14 hours	66	10.9%
15-19 hours	58	9.5%
20-24 hours	27	4.4%
25-36 Hours	34	5.6%
Full time (37 hours)	159	26.1%
Total	602	99%



The maintained youth service is a part time youth service with 74.85% of its staff working less than 37 hours per week. The majority of workers 53.62% (324) work less than 14 hours per week with 42.4% (258) working less than 10 hours per week. The relationship of this information with the levels of qualifications described in Table 4 and the length of time employed described in Table 2 provides evidence to suggest that the maintained youth service does not have an appropriate infrastructure to deliver an effective service in the sense that it is able to maintain its organisational integrity determined by a collective understanding of purpose and values while contributing to the agenda of government and meeting the needs of young people.

The identification of this situation places an onerous responsibility on the maintained youth service to ensure:

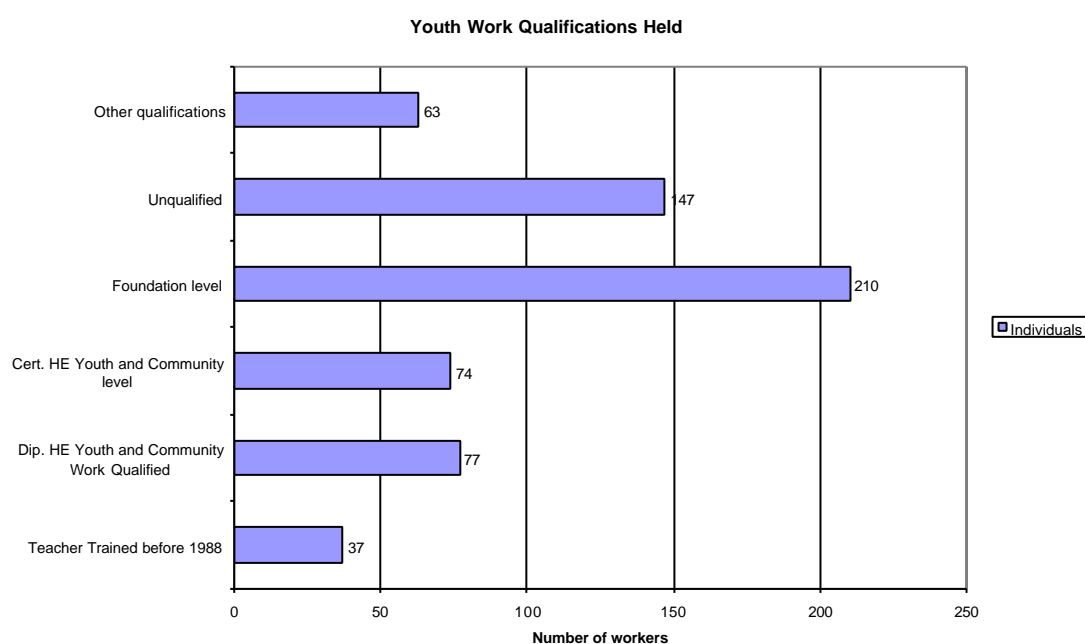
- ◆ appropriate systems for the induction of new youth workers to ensure the inculcation of a collective understanding of maintained youth service purpose, principles, values and outcomes shared across the occupational strands of the organisation.
- ◆ the availability of qualifications pathway and in-service training programmes designed to offer further support to workers entering the service.
- ◆ that support mechanisms are available to translate government policy into a form of practice consistent with the culture of youth work
- ◆ that systems are in place to determine and respond to the identified needs of young people

The figures contained in Table 7 provides evidence that support to youth workers through involvement in relevant in-service training programmes is of a minimal nature and unrelated to inducting the significant numbers of new workers into the non-formal community based learning process advocated in much youth service documentation.

Youth Work Qualifications and Training

Table 4 Youth Work Training and Qualifications

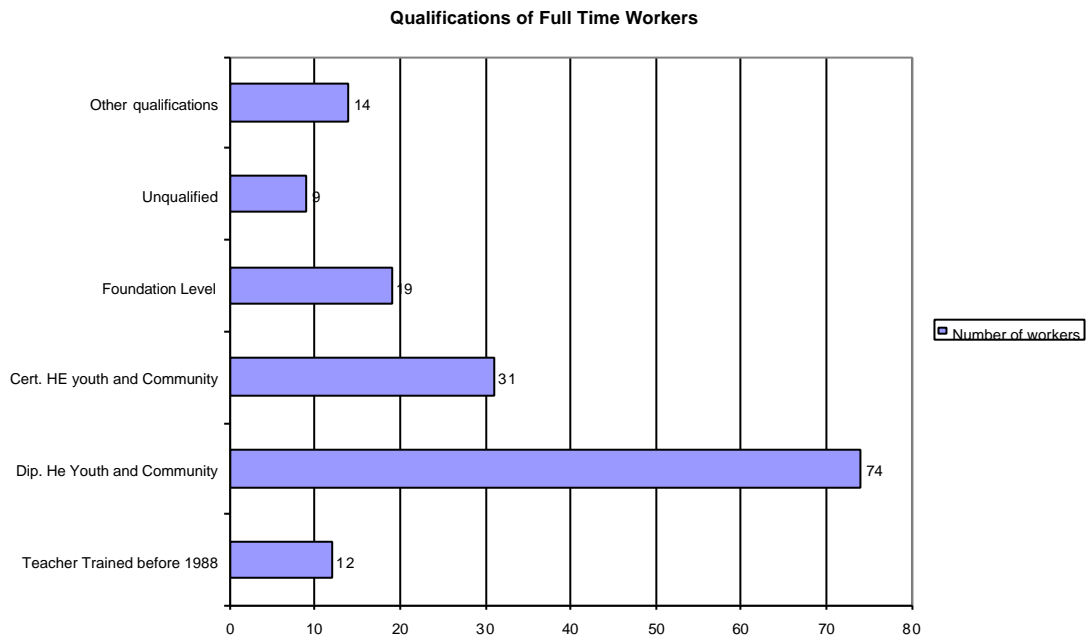
Type of Qualification	Number	%
Teacher Trained before 1988	37	6.1%
Dip. HE Youth and Community Work Qualified	77	12.7%
Cert. HE Youth and Community level	74	12.2%
Foundation level	210	34.6%
Unqualified	147	24.2%
Other qualifications	63	10.4%
Total	608	100%



12.7% (77) of the respondents are *nationally* recognised as qualified Youth and Community Workers having successfully attained the Diploma in Youth and Community work. This figure rises to 18.9% (111) when the pre 1988 Teacher Qualification is included. 34.6% (210) of respondents hold the local level qualification designated the Foundation level. This qualification identifies the holder as a *locally* qualified youth and community worker. 24.2% (147) of the respondents both full-time and part-time are unqualified with 10.4% (63) workers indicating that they hold other qualifications.

Table 5 Qualifications of the 159 full-time workers who responded to the questionnaire

Number of workers	%	Level Of qualification
12	7.6%	Teacher Trained before 1988
74	46.5%	Dip. He Youth and Community
31	19.5%	Cert. HE youth and Community
19	11.9%	Foundation Level
9	5.7%	Unqualified
14	8.8%	Other qualifications



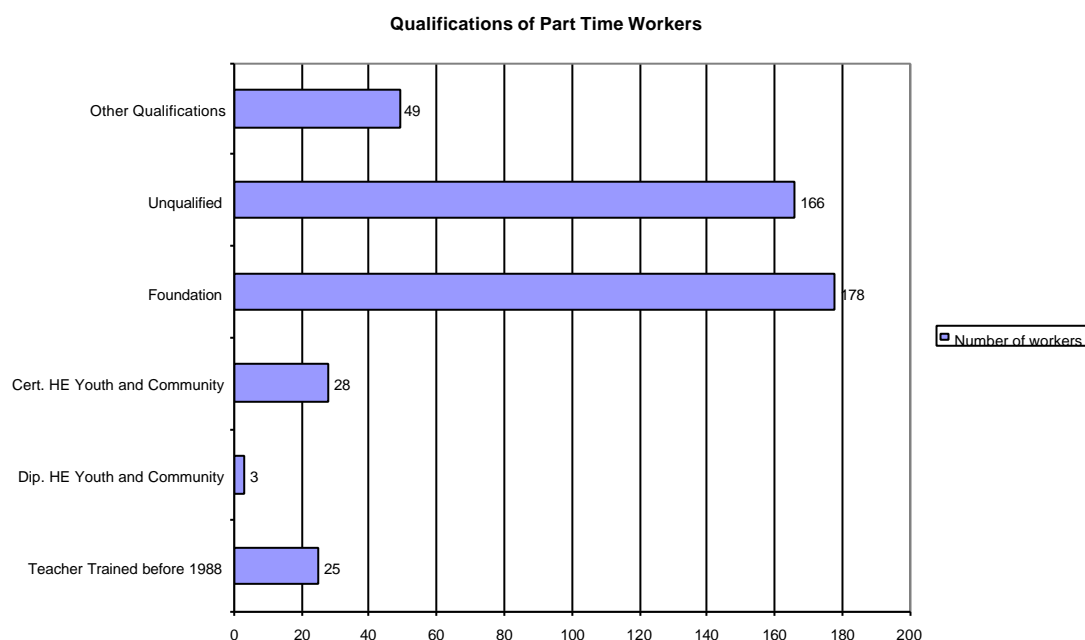
A significant number of unqualified full-time workforce delivers the maintained youth service in Wales with only 54.1% (86) respondents holding a nationally recognised qualification. 7.6% (12) of these are Teacher trained before 1988. This is a significant difference to the last time youth workers were surveyed (HMSO 1988) which revealed that 68% (112) full-time workers at that time were Teacher trained.

Colleagues who are inadequately trained when measured against the recognised qualification for full-time youth workers support this cohort of qualified workers in their work. 19.5% (31) are trained to Cert HE level which equates to a ‘half level qualification’ which can be seen to be a constructed concept without validity. Its purpose is to perpetuate a dangerous assumption prevalent in many local authorities. A number of first degree holders in different disciplines are being given nationally qualified status for a combination of their first degree and the attainment of the Cert HE in youth and community work. This action further weakens the status of the

maintained youth service and undermines the qualification structure. Also of significant concern is the identification of 11.9% (19) workers who are qualified at Foundation level but are employed as full-time youth workers. The position of the maintained youth service is further weakened by the results of the survey, which indicate that 5.7% (9) of respondents hold no recognised youth work qualification to support their full-time practice with 8.8% (14) workers claiming to hold other qualifications. In total the results identify a position where 45.9% (73) respondents employed as full-time youth workers in the maintained youth service do not hold a relevant youth work qualification. This compares unfavourably to the position in England where 90% of all full-time staff are qualified with 68 authorities reporting that all their full-time staff hold the nationally recognised qualification and a further 26 authorities reporting more than 90% were qualified (NYA 1998). The current qualification level of 54.1% for full-time workers in Wales also compares unfavourably with the position in 1984 when it was recorded that 88% of full-time workers were qualified 20% as youth workers and 68% as Teachers (HMSO 1984).

Table 6 Qualifications of the 449 part-time youth workers who responded to the questionnaire.

Number of workers	%	Level of Qualification
25	5.6%	Teacher Trained before 1988
3	.67%	Dip. HE Youth and Community
28	6.2%	Cert. HE Youth and Community
178	39.6%	Foundation
166	37.0%	Unqualified
49	10.9%	Other Qualifications



The part-time workforce included 5.6% (25) individuals who were trained as Teachers prior to 1988 as such hold national recognition status. It also includes .67% (3) workers who hold the Diploma in Youth and Community Work. 6.2% hold the Cert. HE with 39.6% (178) of respondents having the Foundation qualification, which is the recognised as the minimum qualification for part-time youth workers. Of some concern should be the high numbers of

workers 47.9% (215) who are either unqualified or who hold a wide variety of 'other qualifications'.

66 youth workers, 17 full-time and 49 part-time, recorded 49 diverse qualifications, within the other qualifications section. These included B.Ed, B.A (Divinity), BSc, MSc (Environment), HND Business/Finance, Sports Leadership, Play Management, B.Tec Social Care, NVQ Play work. Also listed were a wide range of qualifications that might be considered appropriate as supplements to recognised youth and community work qualifications. These included Sports Leadership, Pacific Institute Training, Mountain Leadership, WRU Coach, Basic Skills Tutor, Senior Winter Sports Leader, Diploma in Counselling, A level Art, PGCE Health and Safety, Diploma in Welfare and Play Management. Other perhaps less obvious qualifications for youth and community work practice included Welsh Rugby Union referee, Senior Member Training qualification, Hair and Beauty, NNEB, Food Hygiene. It must be of significant concern that large numbers of adults, many of who are unsupervised during their normal working times with young people are unprepared through qualification training to undertake their responsibilities in an informed way. This unsatisfactory and potentially dangerous position is exacerbated by the limited opportunities many youth workers have to undertake appropriate in-service training (Table 7). The results of this section of the questionnaire describe an organisation developing at a rate that appears to be out of control. The consequences have the potential to cause significant harm to the maintained youth service, as it requires the complexities of effective youth work practice to be delivered by growing numbers of unqualified and inexperienced workers (see also Tables 5/6). If it takes a short-term approach and as a result avoids developing a sound organisational base, which includes the appropriate training and support of its workforce the maintained youth service takes the risk of failing to promote a collective understanding of its organisational purpose, principles and values. It also faces the further consequence of failing to interpret the requirements of government and understand and respond to the needs of young people.

In-Service Training

Table 7 Youth Work Training In-Service

Training In-Service	Number	%
First Aid	115	18.9%
Child Protection	100	16.4%
Drug and Solvent Abuse	79	13.0%
Mini-bus Training	47	7.7%
Counselling	39	6.4%
Induction	30	4.9%
Health	29	4.8%
Health and Safety	26	4.3%
Disability Awareness	20	3.3%
Equal Opportunities	11	1.8%
Others	112	18.4%
Total	608	100%



The in-service training programme for the maintained youth service identified through the responses of the questionnaire survey does not describe an organisation committed to providing support to its workforce to enable it meet the new agenda described in Extending Entitlement. Neither does it appear to recognise the changes taking place within the maintained youth service as a result of increased government funding. These changes include the rapid increase in the workforce, the widening of the full-time part-time staff ratios; the employment of unqualified workers to key full-time and part-time posts and the increase in specialist focused provision.

What is contained in the responses is a conservative response to what could be interpreted as a 'safe working practice' agenda concerned with health and safety and child protection either as specific subjects or linked to training related to First Aid and mini bus use. Apart from this safety agenda there is little evidence contained within the questionnaire survey of a systematic approach to the in-service training of workers to prepare them for the delivery of a youth service contained within a Young People's Partnership framework.

There is no intent to devalue the importance of providing a safe environment for young people within this conclusion. There is a need however to consider other issues relevant to the delivery of a contemporary curriculum and which reflects government policy and the needs of young people from a youth service perspective. A result of some concern was the limited attention given to Induction Training as part of an in-service training programme. Given the high numbers of unqualified and inexperienced workers within the maintained youth service there was an expectation that this aspect of introduction into the youth service would have been well established. However there was no evidence available from the analysis of the questionnaire results to suggest that significant numbers of new workers within a rapidly expanding work force were being inducted into the youth service either through recognised training programmes or through robust Induction Training programmes. Evidence is available (p....) of significant numbers of part-time workers coming into maintained youth service employment without even the minimum level of training. In this environment youth workers, many of them working in isolation from colleagues and without regular contact with line managers, are apparently

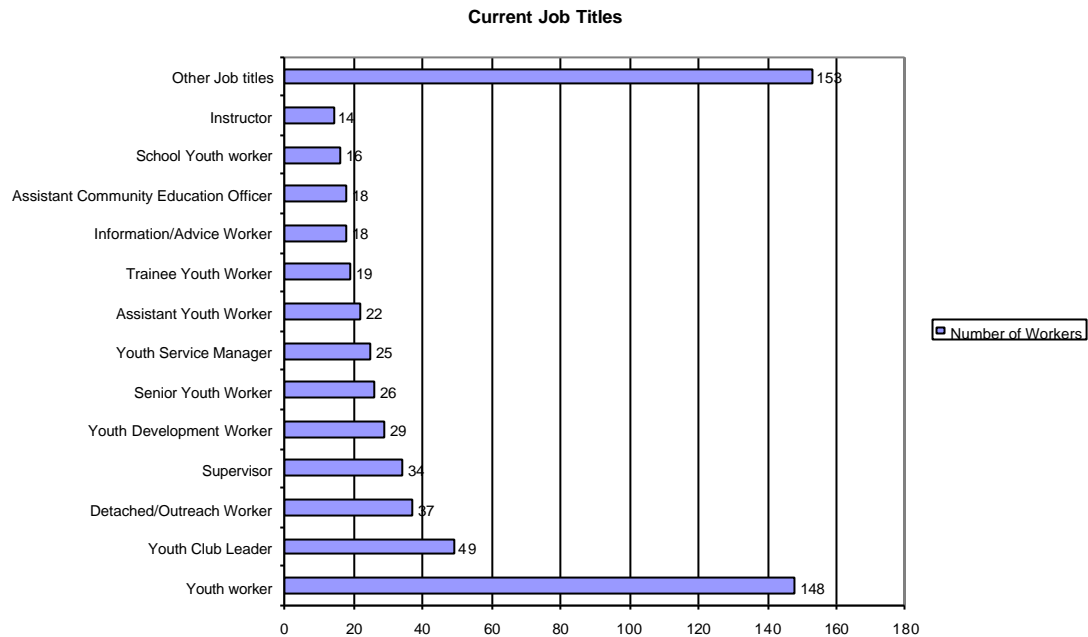
abandoned to work with young people without the benefit of exploring, challenging and understanding either the purpose or the value base of youth work.

The maintained youth service has an inexperienced workforce trained to a low standard of qualification with the majority 34.5% (210) holding the Foundation qualification recognised through the Education and Training Standards Committee as the Joint Negotiation Council as the locally qualified level for part-time youth workers. A further significant result from the responses to the questionnaire was the high level of unqualified workers 24.17% (147) who hold a variety of posts within the maintained youth service both full-time and part time. Youth work has been described as “*skilled educational work*” with those involved in it needing to be “*appropriately trained*” (SCEC 1996:10).

Job Titles

Table 8 Current Job Title

Job title	Number	%
Youth worker	148	24.3%
Youth Club Leader	49	8.1%
Detached/Outreach Worker	37	6.1%
Supervisor	34	5.6%
Youth Development Worker	29	4.8%
Senior Youth Worker	26	4.3%
Youth Service Manager	25	4.1%
Assistant Youth Worker	22	3.6%
Trainee Youth Worker	19	3.1%
Information/Advice Worker	18	2.9%
Assistant Community Education Officer	18	2.9%
School Youth worker	16	2.6%
Instructor	14	2.3%
Other Job titles	153	25.2
Total	608	100%



The analysis of this section of the questionnaire was important in the sense that the results highlighted the difficulty the youth service has in developing a clearly recognised identity through the construction of clear boundaries assisted by well defined and unambiguous job titles. If these are a prime means by which organisations are able to demonstrate its purpose the use 45 separate job titles by the respondents of the questionnaire causes uncertainty and confusion about the nature of youth work. 13 job titles identified that were shared between 71.85% (437) workers. However 25.16% (153) workers shared 32 different job titles. Many of these were easily recognised as having a link to the maintained youth service. These included for example the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Worker, Warden, Youth Action Worker, and Youth Project Tutor. Others had less easy to recognise links with the Youth Service. Summit Co-ordinator, Professional Development and Network Co-ordinator, Mentoring Project Worker, Extending Entitlement Partnership Development Officer, Youth Access Initiative Worker, Quality Assurance Worker, Young Persons Substance Misuse Worker, Support Worker and Activity Tutor are examples of this. What the results describe is a reflection of current funding streams. There is a core of youth workers who are generally described as such; they are however surrounded by a growing number of workers with young people jobs funded through *something for something* funding sources. The effect of this is a diminution of the qualified professional youth worker within wider generic services for young people. The potential consequence being an acceptance of roles and functions that does not reflect the purpose, principles and values of the maintained youth service. It is also possible to suggest that this situation has the potential to change the culture of youth work as alternative agendas and ideologies influence it. Adding to this confusion is the lack of definition between a nationally qualified youth worker, requiring a two year full time training programme resulting in a Diploma in Higher Education, and a locally qualified youth worker requiring a notional 200 hours training at Certificate in Higher Education level. Both full-time and part-time workers use the job description Youth Worker to identify their occupation. This has become a position with the potential to cause further confusion with other professions working with young people from disciplines such as Teaching, Social Work, Police or Careers who often fail to recognise or acknowledge the part-time nature of the maintained youth service.

The other job titles identified through the questionnaire included Basic Skills Tutor, Fundraiser, Young Mums Project Co-ordinator, Youth Forum Co-ordinator, Volunteer Co-ordinator and Instructor which appear to describe a specific activity contained within the frame work of the youth service rather than being an end in itself. These types of job titles add further weight to the argument that the youth service is having focused activities bolted on to it resourced from non traditional sources such as Social Services, Police or Youth Offending Teams with the potential to further distort youth service practice. This is a position exacerbated by the use of a significant number of maintained youth service job titles with little connection to the general concept of youth work.

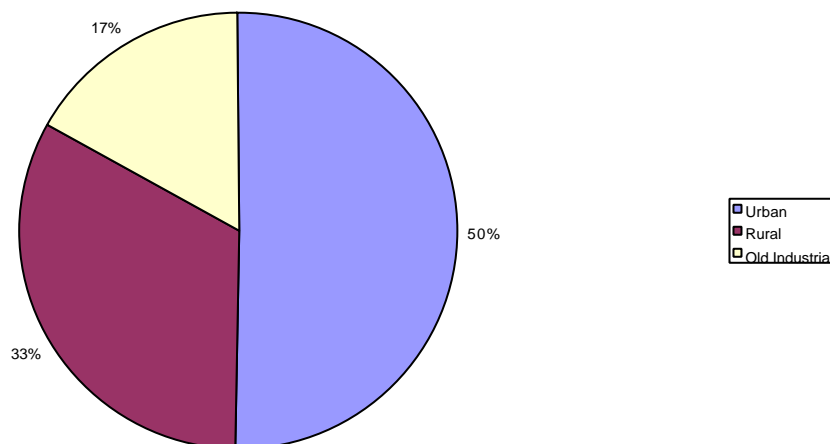
The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire survey would indicate that those working or claiming to work within the maintained youth service as youth workers, in the sense that their work is driven by a collectively understood purpose, cannot in all instances be easily identified.

Location

Table 9 Location of Respondent

Location	Number	%
Urban	305	50.2%
Rural	200	32.8%
Old Industrial	103	16.9%
Total	608	100.0%

Location of Respondents



Information on the location of respondents was obtained to ensure that an appropriate balance was achieved between urban, rural and old industrial environments. The latter definition applying to those youth workers located in the old coal and steel producing areas. There is no suggestion that the results were a representative sample of youth workers employed within the three defined areas. Rather it was an attempt to ensure that issues of practice related to

geographical location and associated demographic factors such as rural isolation or economic disadvantage were included within the questionnaire survey.

Work During Weekends and Holidays

Table 10 Working Weekends

43.75% (266) worked weekends

56.2% (342) did not work weekends

Table 11 Working Recognised Holidays

19.4% (118) worked recognised holidays

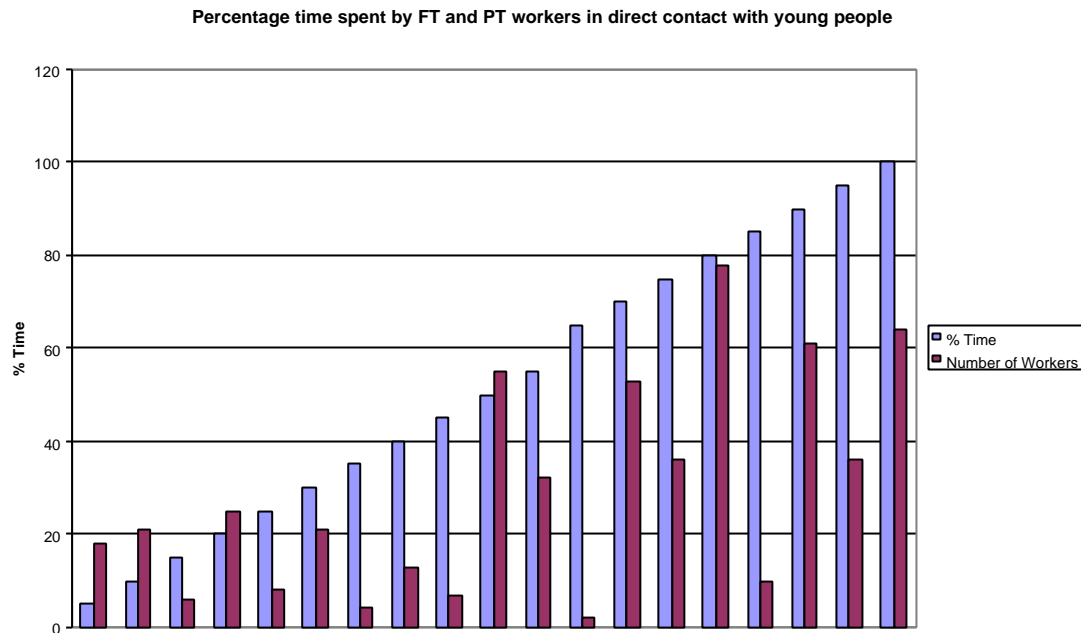
80.59% (490) did not work recognised holidays

The issue of calculating the numbers of workers working weekends and holidays was seen as important in determining the way the maintained youth service responded in a practical way to the identified needs of young people. Williamson (1996) suggested that the core role of the youth service was providing a safe environment for young people to meet friends with some degree of autonomy and take part in activities. On the evidence provided through the analysis of the questionnaire survey the youth service only presents these opportunities to significant numbers of young during weekdays and during school term time. The obvious implication is that many young people are deprived of the benefits of the maintained youth service at the time when it could be argued they need it the most, during weekends and school holidays.

Time Spent in Direct Contact with Young People

Table 12 Estimated Time spent by full-time and part-time workers in direct contact with young people

Number	% of Respondents	% time
18	3.0%	5%
21	3.5%	10%
6	1.0%	15%
25	4.1%	20%
8	1.3%	25%
21	3.5%	30%
4	.65%	35%
13	2.1%	40%
7	1.2%	45%
55	9.0%	50%
32	5.3%	60%
2	.32%	65%
53	8.7%	70%
36	5.9%	75%
78	12.8%	80%
10	1.6%	85%
61	10.0%	90%
36	5.8%	95%
64	10.5%	100%



29.2% (178) workers spent less than 50% of their time in direct contact with young people through their work with the maintained youth service. 61.2% (372) workers spent more than 50% of their time. From this total number of responses it can be calculated that 50.3% (80) full-time workers spend less than 50% of their time in direct contact with young people. 42.8% (68) full-time workers spent more than 50% of their time. 25.1% (98) part-time workers spend 50% or less time in direct contact with young people 71.2% (246) part-time workers spend more than 50% of their time.

Table 13 Estimated time spent by full-time workers in direct contact with young people

Number	Time	% Time
11	nil	nil
11	1.9 hours	5%
12	3.7 hours	10%
2	5.6 hours	15%
12	7.4 hours	20%
5	9.3 hours	25%
10	11.1 hours	30%
3	13.0 hours	35%
3	14.8 hours	40%
4	16.7 hours	45%
18	18.5 hours	50%
10	22.2 hours	60%
1	24.1 hours	65%
6	26.0 hours	70%
10	27.8 hours	75%
12	29.6 hours	80%
4	31.5 hours	85%
8	33.3 hours	90%
7	35.2 hours	95%
10	37.0 hours	100%

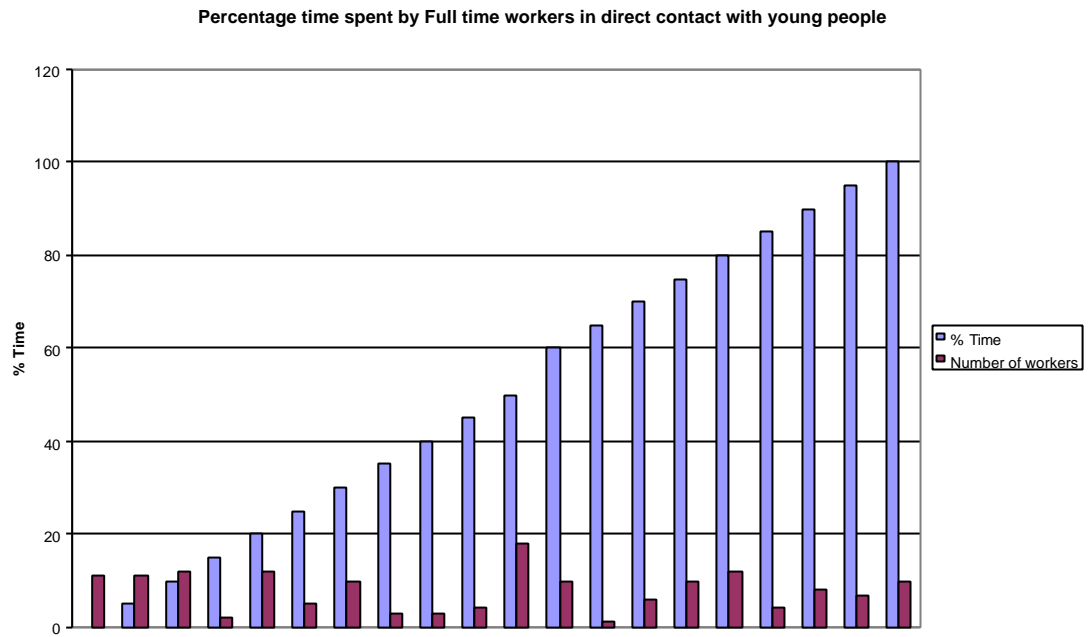
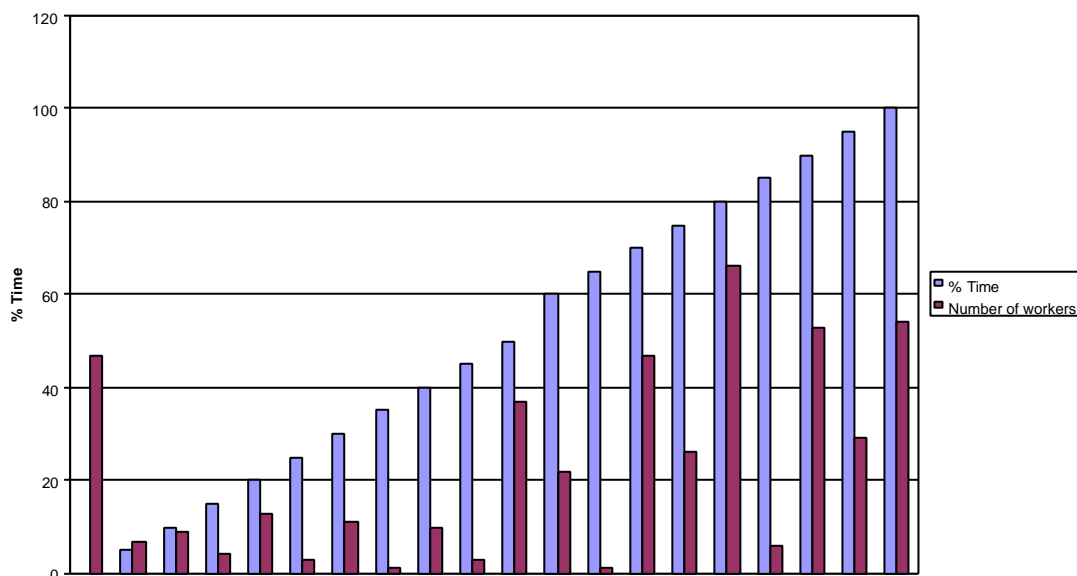


Table 14 Percentage time spent by part-time workers in direct contact with young people

Number	% Time
47	nil
7	5%
9	10%
4	15%
13	20%
3	25%
11	30%
1	35%
10	40%
3	45%
37	50%
22	60%
1	65%
47	70%
26	75%
66	80%
6	85%
53	90%
29	95%
54	100%

Percentage time spent by Part-time workers in direct contact with young people



The results describe an organisation within which those who have the least expertise and experience are given the greatest responsibility for delivering the youth service curriculum. Further analysis would indicate the severity of this practice. 258 part-time youth workers are employed for less than 9 hours per week; of these 72.5% work 70% or more of their time in direct contact with young people.

Table 15 Hours worked in direct contact with young people

Number	%	Hours worked in direct contact with young people
--------	---	--

69	26.7%	100%
52	20%	90%
26	10%	80%
40	15.6%	70%

John Rose
Wales Youth Agency, March 2003