



Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer
Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru
National Academy for
Educational Leadership Wales

Youth Work during Covid-19



Meet our Stakeholders

Tim is currently the Lifelong Learning Policy Officer (Youth) with the Welsh Local Government Association, a position he has held for 11 years. The role includes covering a wide policy remit within the Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Welsh Language Directorate, including Youth Support Services and a variety of areas of policy which impact on young people aged 11-25 years.

During the current crisis, the central principles of youth work (providing safe spaces where young people can associate and enjoy themselves, learn to take greater control of their lives and develop relationships) are being severely tested as practitioners are, through necessity, adjusting to ways of working which, for some, are unfamiliar. This is not to say that 'virtual youth work' has not been going on for some time in various forms but the sector is needing to call on all its traditional qualities of being resilient, responsive and flexible in order to adapt to this change. And it is meeting this challenge.

At strategic level I have been working with Welsh Government, the Principal Youth Officers' Group, the Interim Youth Work Board and other stakeholders to ensure the appropriate support and guidance is in place and available for practitioners, particularly in regard to safeguarding, with a great deal of manager's time currently being committed to carrying out risk assessments of online platforms, for example.

There are some themes emerging from an early mapping exercise across local authority Youth Services as to how and where youth workers are responding. This shows a diverse picture which is very fluid as young people's needs and external influencers (e.g. lockdown) dictate but they are present in settings such as schools, hubs, social care and social justice and wherever their skills are needed.

Something emerging from the scenario too is that in some areas, as they work alongside each other more, where it isn't already present there is a greater understanding and respect developing between the Teaching and Youth Work professions. It is disappointing however that Youth Workers are not also currently recognised as keyworkers, though we have asked for this to be looked at. The response has been incredible throughout and I would like to take the opportunity to thank each and every Youth Worker who is making a valued contribution.

Further information and resources can be found at
www.nael.cymru