

Quality and standards in education and training in Wales

A report on the quality of youth support services

in

Gwynedd 2008

March 2008

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities (LAs);
- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ LAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies;
- ▲ offender learning; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of The Department for Work and Pensions funded training programmes.

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gsi.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2008: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the inspection of youth support services in the local authority area of Gwynedd.

The purpose of the inspection programme is to identify good features and shortcomings in order that providers may improve the quality of education and training and raise the standards achieved by learners. Inspection is also designed to give learners more information about the quality of services they receive.

Youth support services

Estyn carries out inspections of youth support services in accordance with the requirements of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. For the inspection of youth support services, inspection activity may:

- be general or in relation to specific matters;
- relate to a specific person or institution providing services or to a specific class of person or institution; and
- relate to a specific area.

The chief executive of each local authority has a statutory responsibility to put in place partnership arrangements in order to co-ordinate youth support services. The local authority leads these partnership arrangements by planning, co-ordinating and overseeing all youth support services in an area. The statutory framework for this work is set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and 'Extending Entitlement'¹ and its associated directions and guidance.

The Learning and Skills Act 2000, requires the providers to prepare a written statement of the action they propose to take in order to address the recommendations in the inspection report and the timescales for completing the proposed actions.

Youth support services are those services provided, procured or facilitated by a local authority and identified in an area partnership delivery plan. They are those which, in the opinion of the Welsh Assembly Government, 'will encourage, enable or assist young persons (directly or indirectly):

- (a) to participate effectively in education or training;
- (b) to take advantage of opportunities for employment; or
- (c) to participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities.'

¹ Extending Entitlement: Support for 11-25 year olds in Wales Direction and Guidance, July 2002 National Assembly for Wales.

'Cymorth' is the Children and Youth Support Fund. It aims to provide a Network of targeted support for young people within a framework of universal provision, in order to improve the life chances of children and young people from disadvantaged families.

The inspection

The inspection took place from 3 March 2008 to 13 March 2008. A team of Her Majesty's Inspectors from Estyn undertook the inspection. The team also included additional inspectors and peer assessors released from other service providers in Wales. A nominee representing the provider was also a member of the inspection team. Nominees do not take part in discussions about grading.

The team was required to report on standards achieved by learners, the quality of education and training provided, and the quality of leadership and management, and also to judge whether or not the services provide value for money.

The inspection team used the Common Inspection Framework and handbook for youth support services. These documents are available on the Estyn website at www.estyn.gov.uk

Grade descriptors

Estyn applies one of the following grades to each key question of the common inspection framework:

- 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

Contents	Page
Context	1
Summary	3
Recommendations	5
Standards	6
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	6
The quality of education and training	9
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, learning and assessment?	9
Key Question 3: How well do learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	10
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	12
Leadership and management	15
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	15
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	16
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	17
Provider's response to the report findings	19
Appendix 1 The evidence base of the inspection	
Appendix 2 The inspection team	
Appendix 3 Partnership arrangements	

Context

The area

- 1 The overall population of Gwynedd is 116,843. About 69% of the population speaks Welsh. The population of 11-25 year olds is 23,150.
- 2 With a population density of 46 persons per square kilometre, Gwynedd is the third most sparsely populated county in Wales. Gwynedd, being mainly a rural area, is characterised by small settlements scattered around the county and larger urban settlements including Bangor and Caernarfon in the north, Pwllheli to the west, Porthmadog and Blaenau Ffestiniog in the centre, and Tywyn and Dolgellau in the south.
- 3 Gwynedd's economy is mainly based on agriculture and the services sector. There are significant areas of economic and social deprivation, with Peblig (Caernarfon), Marchog 1 (Bangor), Marchog 2 (Bangor) and Cadnant (Caernarfon) amongst the 25% most disadvantaged wards² in Wales.

Partnership arrangements for youth support services

- 4 The Chief Executive of the local authority has delegated his responsibilities for the coordination of youth support services to the Strategic Director (Development).
- 5 The local authority has recently restructured the partnership arrangements for children and young people as the previous system was found by the partnership to be unfit for purpose. The local authority has established a Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership³. A total of 25 members sit on the Strategic Partnership representing a wide range of bodies that provide services for children and young people including Gwynedd Council, Gwynedd Local Health Board, North West Wales NHS Trust, North Wales Police Authority, North Wales Police, North Wales Probation Service, Gwynedd and Anglesey Youth Justice Service, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Mantell Gwynedd⁴ and the Countryside Council for Wales. The Strategic Partnership also includes representatives from primary and secondary schools as well further and higher education establishments.
- 6 In order to facilitate the work of the partnership arrangements, the local authority and its partners have put in place Planning and Development Groups to focus on specific areas of work.
 - Planning and Development Group – Parenting, Early Years and Child Care
 - Planning and Development Group – Young People
 - Planning and Development Group – Participation and Information

² Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (2005)

³ See appendix 3

⁴ Mantell Gwynedd: local voluntary council

- Planning and Development Group – Children and Young People’s Research
- Planning and Development Group – National Service Framework
- Planning and Development Group – Child Poverty

7 In addition, there is a Lead Planning and Development Group, made up of the chairs of the planning and development groups. The lead group aims to oversee and co-ordinate the work of the Planning and Development Groups. It also assists the Strategic Partnership to prepare and publish the Children and Young People’s Plan and advise the Strategic Partnership on the commissioning, communication and performance management arrangements that need to be introduced to implement the Children and Young People’s Plan effectively.

Summary

Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	3
2 How effective are teaching, learning and assessment?	3
3 How well do learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	4
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	4
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	3

How well learners achieve

- 8 Young people who take part in youth support services in Gwynedd achieve good standards in their work. They develop a good level of knowledge, skills and understanding. However, a few young people are complacent about their achievements, and do not challenge themselves to gain more recognition for their own work. Only half of the young people registered with youth support services were present during the period of the inspection.

The quality of provision

- 9 Staff in many providers use a range of teaching methods well. They use a good range of activities to help young people extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. Overall, staff have good termly or annual plans in place. These plans help staff respond to young people's needs and interests well. However, only half of staff make good use of individual session plans to help young people achieve their learning goals. In a few cases, session planning is poor. A minority of staff do not offer enough challenge to young people to extend their learning.
- 10 Overall, young people have good access to a wide range of services but the partnership does not have a full picture of the provision which could be made available to young people. Young people have good opportunities for accreditation but this is not offered to them consistently enough. The partnership responds well to local economic needs and promotes the importance of sustainable development. Young people make extensive use of the Welsh language as a natural language for communication in a variety of activities.
- 11 Youth support services providers support and consult young people well. Young people have access to good quality specialist services and they receive good

guidance and support. Many young people also receive good advocacy services, when needed. However, the partnership does not ensure that all hard to reach young people receive regular support. Most individual providers have clear procedures for young people to make complaints and good procedures for safeguarding young people.

Leadership and management

- 12 The leadership arrangements of the partnership are good. There is a clear and consistent vision for youth support services, as well as good understanding of the need for further improvements in the co-ordination of these services. Leaders recognise where the partnership is in the process of change and know what strategic changes will bring about further improvements in partnership working. As a result, there has been good recent progress in identifying the needs of young people. However, progress to date has been too slow and the authority still does not meet its statutory duties in coordinating youth support services.
- 13 A number of individual providers make good use of specific frameworks to help raise standards, such as Ffynnon⁵ and the National Service Framework (NSF) self-assessment and audit tool. However, quality has not been embedded in the work of the partnership. The focus of planning work is too often on quantitative outputs rather than on the quality of outcomes and their direct impact on young people. Partnership officers use project management techniques well to monitor projects and compliance issues. The self-assessment process is not sufficiently robust because it is too descriptive and does not record the impact of shortcomings, availability of services and standards of service on young people.
- 14 Young people benefit from a wide range of good accommodation and resources of good quality. In particular, a few partners make good use of shared resources. This effective start at sharing resources at a strategic level is improving the partnership's ability to plan more effectively. Overall staffing levels are good. The majority of partners have well qualified and experienced staff, and nearly all partners have staff that can provide bi-lingual services to young people. Partners are beginning to pool and centralise financial resources. The inspection judged that on the whole, partnership arrangements in Gwynedd provide satisfactory value for money.

⁵ Pan Wales Performance Management Software System currently piloted in Gwynedd.

Recommendations

- 15 In order to improve the standards that learners achieve and the quality of education and training, the local authority, through its partnership arrangements for youth support services should address all the shortcomings identified in this report. In particular, the local authority and its partners should:
- R1 complete the process of mapping youth support services and the resources available in order to achieve the statutory duty of co-ordinating services through filling gaps in provision that have been identified and avoiding duplication;
 - R2 strengthen self-assessment processes to ensure that evaluation and judgments are based on robust evidence of performance and progress;
 - R3 ensure that performance management systems:
 - evaluate how effectively the authority co-ordinates youth support services;
 - measure the quality, impact and performance of services; and
 - make more effective use of management data in order to plan more effectively;
 - R4 guarantee that every worker that deals with young people has received a criminal records bureau (CRB) check prior to starting work;
 - R5 extend the opportunities for young people to gain access to formal recognition and accreditation for their work, as well as, develop their basic skills;
 - R6 evaluate and record the attainment and progress of young people consistently; and
 - R7 ensure that every member of staff plans effectively in order to challenge young people to aim for excellence.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Young people's standards of achievement ⁶	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	14%	54%	32%	0%	0%

- 16 Young people who take part in youth support services achieve good standards in their work. Twelve per cent (over 2,700) of young people aged 11-25 achieved formal recognition for the work they undertook through youth support services in 2006-2007. This includes Open College Network credits, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, John Muir Award, the Phoenix Certificate, national governing body sports awards, First Aid certificates and ASDAN⁷ awards.
- 17 Twenty-four per cent of young people who attend local authority youth service centres gained certificates through taking part in a record of achievement scheme accredited by the Welsh Joint Education Committee. For example, the young people develop volunteer skills and improve their understanding of language and cultural matters.
- 18 Also, 300 young people involved in the activities of Young Farmers Clubs (YFC) achieved certificates of achievement. Young people take on responsibilities such as working as volunteers in their club or working on committees at county level. They develop good citizenship and team working skills through this work.
- 19 However, a few young people who attend youth support services are complacent about their achievements. They do not challenge themselves well enough or take part in accredited activities. For example, only 51 young people gained the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award in 2006-2007 and only 3 achieved a Silver Award.
- 20 Vulnerable young people who take part learning programmes work well and improve their life chances. Young people involved with the NACRO⁸ Youth Choices programme achieve accreditation through the Open College Network. They gain credits in food safety, numeracy and literacy and essential skills. One participant, who had dropped out of school, worked with a volunteer teacher to gain GCSEs and then made progress to a college of further education.
- 21 Young parents who took part in cookery courses with the Health Challenge Alliance Gwynedd achieved cookery skills certificates as well as food hygiene awards. As a result they are more able to follow recipes and offer healthy food to their children.

⁶ These grades only reflect a small sample of services observed by inspectors.

⁷ Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

⁸ NACRO: National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders

- 22 Young people who have been homeless take part well in the Llwybr Llwyddiant⁹ scheme. This is a programme of 15 courses accredited by the Open College Network which improves young people's ability to live independently and manage their lives. Seventy-three young people gained credits during 2006-2007. All of them gained at least one credit whilst 50% completed the entire programme.
- 23 Young people approach their work with good levels of motivation and enthusiasm. As a result, they develop a good level of knowledge, skills and understanding. They demonstrate good personal and social skills, show good respect for others, and work well with each other and staff. They develop good levels of confidence and enjoy their learning. All young people work well in both Welsh and English.
- 24 However, a few young people are reluctant to take part in question and answer sessions. Only half of the young people registered with youth support services were present in sessions observed during the period of the inspection.
- 25 Most young people taking part in exercise programmes develop new interests and make good progress. However, a few young people do not engage well with these programmes.
- 26 Young people who take part in voluntary work make good progress. Young people involved in the Clywed¹⁰ programme support youth organisations to improve their ability to take account of young people's views and involve them in decision making. A few of these young people have progressed to careers in social work or youth work.

<p>Young people learn about the impact and consequences of their actions.</p>	<p>A few young people improve their citizenship skills and social awareness by taking part in a junior warden's scheme.</p> <p>The Junior Wardens Scheme is delivered by the Gwynedd County Council's Housing Services Department. It prepares young people living in Communities First areas, such as on housing estates in Bangor and Caernarfon, to take an active role in the life of their estates.</p> <p>The Junior Warden Scheme significantly improves young people's awareness of drugs and alcohol issues, the impact of litter and graffiti on the environment, and the role of the Police and Fire Services. The scheme improves young people's knowledge of fire safety and their understanding of the impact and consequences of hoax calls and arson.</p>
---	---

⁹ Llwybr Llwyddiant: A programme that helps prepare young people to live independently. It is delivered by GISDA, a local social housing project.

¹⁰ Clywed: A project, led by Cartref Bontnewydd Trust, that encourages services to listen to the opinions of children, young people and families. Young people offer advice, help and training to services on how to listen to service users. The project trains young people to assess how well services listen and award a quality mark to services which meet the required criteria.

- 27 Young disabled people who work with the Clebran¹¹ programme improve their awareness of the services available for them. Many of them develop a good understanding of equal opportunity issues and work closely with the local authority disability equalities officer to improve services.
- 28 A few young people improve their vocational skills by taking part in youth support services. Young people who take part in the Llwyddo'n Lleol¹² programme develop good entrepreneurial skills. They successfully started and maintained a variety of businesses including hair and beauty, sign making, music, gardening, building services and wedding planning. Other young people have completed a programme of five courses, accredited by the University of Bangor, which improve their understanding of entrepreneurialism and problem solving. Young people undertaking voluntary work in older people's homes, hospitals or charity shops improve their workplace skills and understanding of social issues, as well as developing their curriculum vitae.

¹¹ Clebran: A project led by Barnardos to help young people with disabilities express their views and opinions of the services available to them.

¹² Llwyddo'n Lleol: A local authority initiative to foster young people's enterprising skills within their communities. It gives young people skills, experience and confidence to contribute to the development of their local community.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective is teaching, learning and assessment?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

The quality of work with young people and assessment ¹³	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	14%	50%	32%	4%	0%

- 29 Staff in many providers meet learners' needs well. They use a range of teaching methods and a good range of activities to engage young people to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 30 In the best cases, staff introduce the purpose of training sessions well and make good use of activities and games to help young people work well together. They link training sessions well to young people's previous learning to help them move forward in their understanding. These staff make effective use of a range of methods, including, competitions, practical activities, slideshows, quizzes and group discussion to help young people gain a full appreciation of the subject. They demonstrate new skills well and give young people responsibility for managing activities. In addition, they challenge young people successfully to help them improve their skills and understanding. These staff make good use of teaching resources including DVDs, film clips, leaflets and workbooks to illustrate the issues they are teaching.
- 31 The majority of staff work well with young people through motivating them well and giving good encouragement to them to plan programmes and take part in activities. They give clear guidance and work sensitively with young people whilst simultaneously challenging them to extend themselves. Most staff work well in both Welsh and English.
- 32 Staff in many providers have good termly or annual plans in place. These address young people's needs well. Staff make good use of course outlines to help young people achieve skills and positive outcomes. The majority of staff maintain young people's interests well by involving them in planning programmes and activities.
- 33 However, only half of staff make good use of individual session plans to help young people achieve their learning goals. In a few cases, session planning is poor because it fails to include both young men and women in all activities and reinforces stereotypical ideas about gender. A few staff do not involve young people well enough in evaluating individual sessions. In contrast, a very few staff make good use of young people's feedback to improve the planning of future sessions.
- 34 A minority of staff do not offer enough challenge to young people to extend their learning. In these cases, the standard of the activities offered to young people is below their capabilities. Staff do not use a variety of activities well enough to stimulate young people. Neither do they explain the subject well enough to help young people understand the topic. Their use of learning resources is poor and they

¹³ These grades only reflect a small sample of services observed by inspectors.

either lose young people's interest as a result, or miss opportunities to use resources to improve young people's skills. In a very few cases, staff do not make sure they involve young women well enough in sessions.

- 35 Staff in individual providers make effective use of a variety of systems for assessing young people's progress. They use accreditation criteria well to assess young people's progress and to formally recognise their attainments. These staff recognise the importance of helping young people understand how well they have achieved and what they have learnt.
- 36 However, a minority of staff do not record young people's achievements well enough. They miss opportunities to make sure that young people gain formal recognition for the good work they do. In addition, a few staff do not make enough use of internal systems to record young people's achievements.
- 37 Staff in many providers make good use of question and answer sessions to check young people's understanding. They pay good attention to individual young people to check what they have learnt. They give good feedback to young people about their progress to help them understand what they have learnt. These staff also observe young people well during practical activities to assess their progress.
- 38 However, a very few staff do not assess young people's prior learning well which means they are unable to make sure that young people either improve their understanding or gain new skills. A few staff do not use systems to evaluate the outcomes of their work consistently and make sure that the outcomes gained by young people inform future planning.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 39 On the whole, young people in Gwynedd have good access to services which meet their needs and interests. In most cases, key partners work well together operationally to ensure that there is a wide range of learning experiences available for young people across the county in accessible locations. As a result, the majority of young people have good access to their entitlements.
- 40 However, the partnership does not have an adequate overview of all of the youth support services available. It is unable, therefore, to identify gaps in the provision and cases where different providers duplicate services. As the current provision has not been mapped in enough detail, there are examples of geographical gaps and significant shortcomings in the means by which information is provided to young people. There are also shortcomings in the open access provision between April and September and the way in which the 19-25 age group and hard to reach young people are targeted.
- 41 In many cases, there are good opportunities for young people to gain accreditation, for example the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, the Open College Network, ASDAN, Millennium Volunteers and BTEC modules. However, providers do not use

opportunities for accreditation consistently enough to acknowledge young people's good work. As a result, important opportunities are lost. Also, most providers do not plan for or record how young people develop their key skills and basic skills.

- 42 The partnership consults widely with young people. Over 1,500 children and young people were included in the consultation on the proposed Children and Young People's Plan. In other cases, young people were included well in a consultation on the local authority's transport project and local regeneration plans.

<p>The partnership responds well to local economic needs and prepares young people well for the world of work.</p>	<p>The local authority recently undertook a detailed assessment of future growth sectors to inform this area of its work. The local authority works well with partners such as the 14-19 Learning Network, Careers Wales North West, colleges, Menter a Busnes and training agencies to prepare young people for work opportunities in identified sectors. Providers make sure that local young people have the required skills and confidence to fulfil the needs of local employers. Together, partners put training programmes and dedicated apprenticeship schemes in place.</p> <p>For example, young mothers were targeted for training for the retail sector in Caernarfon and the vast majority of them now have jobs.</p> <p>In another case, young people are being trained as outdoor activity leaders in order to respond to a lack of local bilingual workers in a sector which is developing rapidly. Recent research shows that only 5% of the workforce in this important sector in north west Wales are Welsh speakers.</p> <p>The 'Llwyddo'n Lleol' scheme offers young people very good opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills and to become more enterprising in their communities. Since the beginning of the scheme almost 100 young people have received bursaries to trial various enterprises. Fifty-one of these have developed into full-time businesses and a significant number have started employing others.</p>
--	--

- 43 Young people have good learning opportunities which promote sustainable development. There are a number of good examples of projects which involve improving the environment such as cleaning rivers, clearing coppices and re-opening public footpaths. There is one example of young people in the Maesgeirchen estate in the Marchog ward in Bangor who are working effectively with the Communities First Partnership to clean the river Cegin, and take great pride in this achievement.
- 44 Young people have good opportunities to volunteer with local organisations and charities. Over 120 young people volunteer through Mantell Gwynedd, and help in shops and offices with charities. Many more young people assist and work in organisations such as the Urdd, Young Farmers' Clubs and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, and are members of youth forums.

- 45 In almost all cases, Welsh is used widely as a natural language of communication by young people in a variety of activities and locations. Those who do not speak Welsh are assimilated in a supportive and sensitive way into the main youth support services activities which enable them to develop their skills and confidence in the language.

Key Question 4: How well are young people cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 46 Providers of youth support services support young people well. The health and wellbeing of young people is a core feature of the partnership arrangements in Gwynedd.
- 47 Most providers consult with young people regularly and well about their care and support needs.

<p>Listening to the views of young people</p>	<p>The Clywed scheme employs young people to assess how well providers respond to children, young people and their families by assessing the services they provide. Clywed members are trained to judge the extent to which providers consider and listen to the views of children and young people.</p> <p>Successful providers receive the Clywed quality mark to recognise that young users play an active part in planning processes and methods of service delivery.</p> <p>To date, Clywed has accredited 62 local providers, many of which provide youth support services. These include Careers Wales North West, libraries, schools, surgeries and the National Public Health Service.</p>
---	---

- 48 Most young people access good quality specialist services which help them to make choices about healthy living, sexual health and drug and alcohol misuse. Staff provide a variety of good quality guidance materials for young people. In particular, Llywio'r Llwybr, a local information shop in Blaenau Ffestiniog, offers a range of good quality information services and specialist health advice to young people.
- 49 The partnership has developed a number of interesting schemes to support young people in Gwynedd; however, as yet these plans are not fully implemented. In general, young people have only limited information about local youth support services.
- 50 Most providers offer young people good guidance and support. Several services co-operate well at an operational level to respond to the needs of young people to help them make informed choices about their education, training and employment. School youth workers offer good support to young people in schools and youth clubs. Most providers offer individual support to young people when needed, for example the young carers' schemes. A few staff also make good use of formal systems to assess the care needs of young people and work well with these young people to prepare their individual care plans.

- 51 The partnership has identified tackling homelessness as a key priority and has commissioned work on the accommodation needs of young people in Gwynedd. GISDA (the Arfon Single Homeless Youth Service) offers good support for young homeless people and prepares them for independent living. The results of initial assessments of young people's needs are used well to guide individual development plans.
- 52 By working together, providers offer good induction programmes and good support for young people at important periods of transition in their lives. Several providers, including Careers Wales North West, offer effective and accessible resources to help young people gather information about opportunities to remain in the area and work through the medium of Welsh.
- 53 Many young people receive good advocacy services from a range of providers. The Children's Services of the local authority funds the Tros Gynnal advocacy service for young people in their care. The partnership has commissioned the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to provide an advocacy service for the other children and young people of the county in Communities First areas. Barnardo's also provide an advocacy service for young people with disabilities.

<p>Effective pilot schemes to meet the needs of young people</p>	<p>Building on its needs assesment – Gwynedd Children and Young People Today, the partnership is developing a number of good schemes to support young people access services more easliy.</p> <p>At present the partnership runs a pilot scheme to provide subsidised transport in the evening for young people aged 16-25. This innovative scheme offers return tickets on specific routes for £1 per night to all young people living in the Llŷn, Pwllheli and Porthmadog areas.</p> <p>This scheme encourages young people to use public transport to access local facilities such as cinemas and leisure centres. It also enables young people to travel locally so that they become more confident to access existing services outside their immediate community.</p> <p>Young people report that they use the service to enable them to access services after school and college.</p>
--	--

- 54 Individual providers, including schools, colleges, Careers Wales North West and the local authority youth service, provide opportunities for young people with a disability to develop their social and work related skills. These providers ensure that young people with a disability integrate well into mainstream provision. Nevertheless, the partnership does not ensure all hard to reach young people receive regular support.
- 55 Most providers have introduced good complaints procedures. However, the partnership does not currently have a centralised system for dealing with complaints on an interagency basis.

- 56 Most individual providers have good procedures in place for safeguarding young people. Almost all providers require their staff to complete Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks before working with young people.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 4: Good features but shortcomings in important areas

- 57 The vision of the partnership reflects well the policy and requirements set by the Welsh Assembly Government for planning and co-ordinating the arrangements for youth support services in local authority areas. Appropriately, this vision links well to the aims and objectives of the Council, the Development Directorate and to key planning documents of the authority such as the Community Strategy and the Single Education Plan.
- 58 The Strategic Director, Leader of the Council and directors/senior officers of partner agencies have a clear and consistent vision for the partnership. They have thorough knowledge of the partnership's priorities and values, and good understanding of their responsibilities as members of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. These senior partners are aware of the need for further improvements in co-ordinating services; recognise where they are in the process of change; and know what strategic changes they need to make to bring about further improvements.
- 59 The vision and leadership of the Strategic Partnership is beginning to bed in, but is not yet securely in place for all partners. This means that some partners continue to work towards their own agenda and have not yet fully embraced the aims and objectives of the partnership.
- 60 The restructuring of the Development Directorate and the recent reorganisation of the partnership arrangements for children and young people has brought positive change to co-ordination arrangements. These changes have brought greater focus and clarity to multi-agency partnership working. However, progress to date has been too slow and the authority does not fulfil its statutory duties.
- 61 There has been very good recent progress in identifying the needs of young people in Gwynedd. Despite this, the partnership does not have a good enough overview of youth support services and therefore cannot co-ordinate services effectively.
- 62 The performance management processes of the local authority are still developing and presently there is too much focus on the measurement of process rather than on the measurement of the impact of the partnership on improved outcomes for young people. The partnership does not measure how effective it is at co-ordinating youth support services.
- 63 The partnership does not have a plan with specific targets to meet priorities. Without this, it is not able to measure progress effectively, accurately identify areas in need of improvement or take appropriate actions to address issues. However, a few of the members of the partnership have sophisticated performance management arrangements in place. These systems help them to measure progress against agreed targets, identify service gaps and facilitate good training to meet both strategic and operational needs. In the best examples, effective partnership working

means that these training opportunities are available to other members of the partnership. Presently, the partnership does not encourage enough of this type of joint working.

- 64 Mantell Gwynedd, the umbrella group for local voluntary organisations, represents the sector well on the partnership. There is good support for representatives from Mantell Gwynedd. In addition, representatives meet regularly to make sure that relevant information is fed back to all partners in the sector.
- 65 Sensibly, the Welsh Language Board has arranged representation for organisations receiving their funding. These processes ensure good representation of smaller providers within the authority who have limited capacity to contribute to planning and coordination processes.
- 66 The local authority does not have a clear policy that requires staff to have Criminal Records Bureau checks prior to starting work with young people. Young people are placed at risk of potential harm as a consequence of this important shortcoming.
- 67 Early indicators are that strategic priorities and aims of the developing Children and Young People's Plan are appropriate and well linked to the identified priorities of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. This means the authority is becoming more effective in developing a more cohesive approach to planning and delivering services for children and young people.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality standards?

Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

- 68 The leaders and managers of individual providers know the local authority's area well and have a good knowledge of local demography. The partnership conducted a needs audit in 2006 which is currently being updated to establish a good baseline for the partnership. However, quality has not been embedded in the work of the partnership.
- 69 Providers monitor within their own organisations but do so by being reactive to situations. The partnership does not monitor or evaluate the quality of services. To date, senior managers have not communicated the partnership's aims and vision sufficiently well to staff at every level.
- 70 Most providers have a good level of commitment to consulting with young people in Gwynedd. Individual organisations make good use of the Clywed quality mark to assess how effectively they listen to the views of young people.
- 71 A number of individual providers make good use of specific frameworks to help raise standards; for example, the partnership makes good use of Ffynnon and the National Service Framework (NSF) self-assessment and audit tool to set priorities. However, providers do not collaborate well enough in using and analysing the information that is available in terms of improving the provision for young people.

- 72 Managers make good use of the expertise of external consultants to inform the partnership about the effectiveness of its systems and structures for working in partnership and setting a strategic direction. Following recent report, the partnership consulted widely with others, including the 14-19 partnership, Fforwm¹⁴, and the voluntary sector on the recommendations, before making changes, such as the structure and membership of the partnership.
- 73 Partnership officers use project management techniques well to monitor projects and compliance issues. They take action when organisations or individuals do not prepare reports as required.
- 74 The partnership does not know how well young people achieve. The partnership does not have a system available to record to what extent services are used by young people, their attainments, skills gained, or their rate of progress.
- 75 The self-assessment process is not sufficiently robust nor does it contain enough data. The self-assessment report is too descriptive and does not record the impact of shortcomings, availability and standards of service on young people. The self-assessment report contains most of the shortcomings identified by the inspection team, but it does not realise the effect that the shortcomings have on young people and on the grades that have been awarded. The inspection team agrees with the self-assessment grades on three of the seven key questions but has awarded lower grades to the other four key questions.
- 76 There are examples of specific individual projects tracking client outcomes well such as the KIT (Keeping in Touch) project.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 77 Young people benefit from a wide range of accommodation and resources of good quality. In particular, resources in the climbing centre at Caernant, the leisure centre at Bangor and the youth clubs in Caernarfon and Bethesda are of a high standard. A few young people make effective use of up-to-date information technology resources available within the Digilabs¹⁵ provided through the local authority youth service. In particular, staff use resources well to provide young people with a wide range of learning experiences. Generally, disabled young people have adequate or good access to buildings.
- 78 A few partners make good use of shared resources. For example, the local authority, the Urdd and the Young Farmers Club share village hall accommodation. In addition, the local authority has given, on loan, specialist outdoor equipment to a school's adventure club. The partnership does not however make enough use of shared resources, as it has only started the process to commission research to identify the full range of resources available locally for youth support services.

¹⁴ Fforwm: The representative body for colleges in Wales.

¹⁵ The latest ICT facilities for young people sourced through CanllawOnline's Credu initiative.

- 79 Overall staffing levels are good. The majority of partners have well qualified and experienced staff, and nearly all partners have staff that can provide bilingual services to young people.
- 80 Most partners are strongly committed to staff development. In the statutory sector, staff benefit from an informative and useful induction session and a good performance review system. There are good examples of partners sharing staff training; for example, the local authority youth service delivers specific training events to its own staff, the youth justice service, the regeneration and leisure departments and Careers Wales North West. However, despite individual examples of good practice, there is no overall workforce development planning across the partnership. Therefore, the partnership cannot address the staff development needs of all partners or respond collaboratively to the identified needs of young people.
- 81 Partners are beginning to pool and centralise resources. For example, the National Public Health Service has recently seconded a senior practitioner to carry out work on behalf of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. In addition, the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Partnership and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership jointly commissioned a group of young people to consult with other children and young people in Gwynedd.
- 82 The partnership is well informed of Cymorth funded provision. There is good use of internal audit to make sure that partners use Cymorth funding appropriately, and correct action is taken to address any inappropriate use of funding. However, not all partners are clear on the partnership's decision making processes to distribute Cymorth funding.
- 83 The inspection judged that on the whole, partnership arrangements in Gwynedd provide satisfactory value for money.

Provider's response to the report findings

The Response of Gwynedd's Strategic Partnership for Children and Young People on the Quality and Standards of Youth Support Services in Gwynedd

Gwynedd's Strategic Partnership for Children and Young People has received Estyn's report on the Quality and Standards of Youth Support Services in Gwynedd and has noted its content.

The Strategic Partnership is pleased that Estyn has highlighted and recognised the important steps that have been taken by the partnership to promote the welfare of children and young people since it was established in January 2007.

The Strategic Partnership accepts that there is room for improvement.

The Strategic Partnership accepts the recommendations which have been made by Estyn. Indeed, the Strategic Partnership is wholly confident that it can respond positively and effectively to these recommendations through the Children and Young People's Plan for the benefit of all the young people of Gwynedd.

Appendix 1

The evidence base of the inspection

Eight inspectors spent a total of 14 days inspecting youth support services.

Inspectors made over 25 observation visits to projects, activities and centres. In addition, the team held over 65 interviews and focus group meetings.

The inspection team observed a wide variety of youth support services including:

- services provided by the Local Authority;
- services provided by other statutory bodies; and
- voluntary sector provision.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- learners;
- staff and volunteers;
- members of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Planning and Development Groups;
- managers and representatives of projects, organisations and providers; and
- local authority senior officers and elected members.

The inspection team considered:

- self-evaluation reports;
- a selection of young people's work;
- inspection evidence from the Wales Audit Office and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales;
- documentation made available by the Partnership;
- documentation made available by individual service providers;
- the evidence from previous Estyn inspections of all relevant providers; and
- local plans and strategies, including the Single Education Plan, and the agendas and minutes of meetings of key groups.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Betsan O'Connor HMI	Reporting Inspector
Liam Kealy HMI	Team Inspector
Sw Roberts HMI	Team Inspector
Ann Jones HMI	Team Inspector
Angharad Reed HMI	Team Inspector
Catrin Rees (Estyn secondee)	Team Inspector
Cefin Cambell	Additional Inspector
Marc Forster	Peer Assessor
Darren Griffiths	Provider nominee

Appendix 3

Partnership arrangements

