Feasibility Study

Youth Work Funding Review

Title: Feasibility Study Youth Work Funding Review
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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Acronym/Key word	Definition
WGYEB	Welsh Government, Youth Engagement Branch
IYWB	Interim Youth Work Board
VSO	Voluntary sector organisations
LA	Local authorities
NOS	National Occupational Standards for Youth Work
REA	Rapid evidence assessment
CPI	Consumer Price Index
RSG	Revenue Support Grant

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 This report presents the findings from the first phase of a review of youth work funding in Wales carried out on behalf of the Welsh Government, Youth Engagement Branch (WGYEB). The work of the Interim Youth Work Board (IYWB) provides the background to this research. In 2018 the Board was tasked with developing recommendations aimed at achieving a sustainable delivery model for youth work in Wales, and these have provided the impetus for this research. The fourth of its 14 recommendations was to undertake an independent review into the sufficiency, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of funding and expenditure on youth work services across the Welsh Government, local authorities, and voluntary organisations, to assess the effective delivery of outcomes and impact for young people.

Aims of the Funding Review.

1.2 The aim of this review, commissioned by the Welsh Government, is to undertake a review of youth work funding across Wales within the voluntary and maintained youth work sectors to help inform the development of a sustainable model for youth work in Wales. The study will consider:

- how current funding mechanisms impact youth work provision across Wales and how any variations affect accessibility

- a cost benefit analysis (CBA) to establish the impact and economic effectiveness of youth work funding.

1.3 The review will be progressed in three phases. Details of these phases, and their objectives, are summarised below.

1.4 The objectives of **Phase 1** were to provide a framework for further phases of this research, including:

- the establishment of a steering group

- undertaking a rapid evidence assessment (REA) of available literature/empirical research on relevant current practice in relation

to analysis of funding and models for measuring value for money in the UK and beyond, including the Welsh Government commissioned `Research to inform the development of a youth work strategy'.

- undertaking a feasibility study to establish what data is available and to what extent it can address the scope of the proposed research for phases 2 and 3.

1.5 **Phase 1** has been carried out fully. A steering group has been established, a rapid evidence assessment (REA) of relevant literature on current models of establishing cost benefits and social value in youth work across the UK, Republic of Ireland, and the EU has been undertaken. A feasibility study of four local authority areas has been carried out and data has been collected to inform the next phases of the research.

1.6 **Phase 2** will review funding sources available for youth work in Wales for both the voluntary and maintained sector and how these funding sources are allocated across the nation's 22 local authority areas. This phase will:

- consider where funding comes from, how this is accessed and what the money is spent on
- identify barriers and challenges to accessing funding particularly, but not limited to, the voluntary sector.

1.7 This phase will also establish how the funding for youth work is utilised across the voluntary and maintained sector and how variations in usage of this funding across local authority areas impacts on youth work provision. It will aim to:

- identify who is making the decisions on allocated funding

- identify the extent to which young people have a say in funding

- understand the accountability, governance, and leadership mechanisms and reporting processes for youth work

- explore commissioning/partnership arrangements between voluntary and maintained sectors and how this is planned, organised, and monitored

- create a framework for collecting data regarding the impact and benefits of youth work to enable the undertaking of a cost benefit analysis in Phase 3.

1.8 **Phase 2** of the review will also involve the collection of data relating to all 22 local authority areas. This will include published data as well as data from a survey designed for the purpose of this review and from interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders in the voluntary and maintained youth sectors.

1.9 **Phase 3** will aim to provide evidence of the impact and economic effectiveness of funding in the maintained and voluntary youth work sectors through a cost-benefit analysis, highlighting evidence of good practice.

Overview of Report

1.10 The report firstly outlines the evidence from a rapid evidence assessment informing phases 1-3 of the research. Secondly, an overview of the methodology and sampling adopted for this feasibility study is provided. Thirdly, findings from the data collected are presented. The conclusions drawn from the evidence collected in this feasibility study are discussed and finally recommendations for phases 2 and 3 of the funding review are suggested.

1.11 To conclude this introduction an overview of the parameters of youth work informed by its legislative base is discussed. This provides the context for this feasibility study and for phases 2 and 3 of the funding review.

Defining Youth Work

1.12 The youth service across Wales is comprised of a wide and diverse range of organisations and is 'the framework within which youth work is delivered and is mainly carried out through the local authority (the maintained sector), national and local voluntary youth organisations

(the voluntary sector), with both sectors often working closely together'
(Welsh Local Government Association, no date, np). The youth service
is a clearly-defined system acknowledged through legislation,
significant government [reports](#) and through the evaluation of historical
and contemporary practice. Youth work is the process that takes place
within the framework provided by the youth service and involves a wide
range of methods and the development of positive and meaningful
relationships underpinned by a clear set of principles and [purposes](#).

1.13 It is widely understood that the policy context for youth work in Wales is
provided in the main by: Welsh Government directions and guidance in
Extending Entitlement (2002); The Learning & Skills Act (2000); The
National Youth Work Strategy (2019) and Youth Work in Wales:
Principles and Purposes (2022). It is also informed by the Youth Work
National Occupational Standards (NOS) (2019).

1.14 Our research will acknowledge that, as noted by Estyn, the term 'youth
work' is used to identify the form of work with young people carried out
within the framework of the youth service. However, it is also
recognised that the term youth work is often confused with generic
work with young people with such descriptions as services for young
people and youth work services. This can lead to conflicting ideologies
and priorities (Estyn, 2018). In response, our research will be carried
out within a very clear philosophy, which is to explore what the youth
service in the voluntary and maintained sector is able to deliver through
its youth work practice. To achieve this, it is important to recognise that
youth workers base their practice on a clear set of characteristics.
These specifically include:

- the voluntary involvement by young people who have chosen to
  engage in the process; that it is age specific, focused on 11-25 year
  –olds
- that it uses a non-formal education/informal learning methodology.
- it is driven by a young-people-first approach
- a universal approach (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007).

1.15 The National Occupational Standards for Youth Work refer to the holistic development of young people, recognising that personal, social, and educational development can also include, for example, physical, political, and spiritual development. These are the parameters of the youth work methodology to be investigated in our research. Having clearly identified the underpinnings of youth work, it is necessary to understand the organisational context within which this work is carried out. The key purpose of this research will be to investigate how effectively youth work, delivered through the youth service in all its forms, supports young people to develop holistically, by working with them to facilitate their personal, social, and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence, and place in society and to reach their full potential (Community Learning and Development Scotland, 2019, p. 4).

1.16 Youth work has an inherent fluidity, draws on principles of non-formal and informal education and as such it works with young people and communities to develop programmes of work which are based on the contexts, development needs, interests and importantly, the passions of young people. As a result, there should be a flexible approach to developing local youth work practice. Typical youth work methods have been identified by Estyn (2006) and include:

- centre-based work
- detached, outreach and mobile work
- curriculum specialities like arts and culture, first aid, sport, health etc
- information, advice, guidance and counselling services
- project work
- residential work
- targeted provision for specific groups
- collaborative working
- mechanisms for consulting young people
- providing opportunities for volunteering

- peer education

- community action

- participation in decision making

- international experiences

- one to one work.

1.17   Wider work with young people may not necessarily be within the scope of this review. However, where this is apparent within the evidence collected it will be reported on.

1.18   A caveat of this study, and one that is recognised in other similar studies, (Youth Link Scotland: National Youth Agency for Scotland, 2016) is while we can define youth work from a policy perspective within Wales, defining youth work from individuals /organisations experience may vary.

2. Rapid Evidence Assessment

2.1 The Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) considered available evidence on the costs and benefits of youth work in studies carried out within the UK and beyond. In addition, relevant Welsh reports have helped to inform the picture of evidence available from a Welsh context. The outcome of the REA will inform subsequent phases of the research.

2.2 Our REA methodology focused on process questions, implementation questions and on questions exploring the economic findings of relevant research. The REA overall question was to explore how youth work is funded in both the voluntary and maintained sectors. The REA gathered evidence on:

- the meaning and nature of youth work in the voluntary and maintained sectors, young people's involvement in decision making and theories which underpin this context.

- measures of all these concepts

- the study types that can help address these questions.

In order to scope relevant literature for the subject of the REA, we adopted a flexible, open research frame to consider:

- identifying youth work literature including from the voluntary sector, the maintained sector, in targeted and in universal or open access provision.

- research primarily carried out within the UK but also the Republic of Ireland, Europe and further afield

- research published within the last 15 years

- mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative studies

- how the voices of young people are drawn upon.

2.3 The search included books, journals, articles, electronic databases, and other written reports that were available and met our criteria. This followed the strategy outlined in the relevant REA toolkit (Civil Service,

2014). The REA team used a two-stage process of selecting studies for inclusion, initially reviewing abstracts where available and then the full resource. Clear criteria were used to enable us to identify studies of higher quality from those of weaker studies. We considered the:

- Methodological quality of each study
- The relevance of the research design for answering our REA question
- The relevance of the study focus for answering the REA question

REA search terms included:

- social impact of youth work
- youth work cost benefit analysis
- youth work social return on investment
- the value of youth work
- measuring the impact of youth work
- economic value of youth work
- evaluation of youth work.

2.4   The results of the REA indicate that there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of universal youth work where engagement is voluntary for the young person. Questions have been raised in the literature about the 'effectiveness' and 'impact' of youth work more generally (Youth Investment Fund, 2021) and how benefits arising from youth work can be understood. Duffy has argued, in an article in Youth and Policy Journal, that given its complex nature and the range of variables impacting upon its outcomes, for example the neighbourhood it operates in, the type of young people involved, that youth work's ability to clearly demonstrate economic effectiveness according to a cost benefit analysis is limited (Duffy, 2017, p.45-61). It was noted in 2012 that the evidence of the impact of youth work was limited and disjointed (Mundy-McPherson, Fouche and Elliot, 2012). However, researchers are increasingly adopting different approaches to assessing youth

work's benefits (Youth Link Scotland, 2020) in response to these questions.

2.5   Two key themes have been identified from this REA. Firstly, the evidence that informs how we can better understand the economic and broader social value of youth work and, secondly, an overview of methodologies adopted to undertake high quality research of this nature.

Research evidence for the economic and broader social value of Youth Work

2.6   The studies explored in this REA focus upon quantifying the economic value of youth work using methodologies such as Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) and Social Return on Investment (SROI) and factoring in volunteer time. However, the REA did not identify any studies which considered issues of the longer-term sustainability of current youth work delivery and funding models, or how they may be improved, which is one of the aims of this review. Themes emerging from the existing research reviewed in this REA indicate the need for both a greater understanding of the mechanisms of funding and the strategic oversight of youth work. In addition, evidence suggests there is potential to explore the economic and social impact of youth work in the maintained and voluntary sector.

Methodologies adopted

2.7   Examples of how the CBA or SROI approaches have been used previously to demonstrate impact and economic value across a number of the studies have been captured in this REA in order to design a methodology aimed at evaluating the costs and benefits of a range of interventions delivered by the youth service in Wales. By employing such an approach an estimation can be made regarding the value and social impact of work undertaken by the youth service in Wales. As has been highlighted in a number of the studies, youth work is a broad area of practice. It is therefore vital that any approach at estimating social value provides clarity regarding the scope, and limitations of such a

study, given the complexity and diversity of the sector, and the multiple sources of funding that it attracts.

2.8   All the studies reviewed employ mixed and/or multiple methods of data collection, for example qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis, documentary analysis and reviewing of existing local and national evaluation and research data. The pragmatic approach employed in this review is therefore advocated as it allows the opportunity to investigate the complex contexts in which youth work is situated and enable a better understanding of the effectiveness, transparency, and impact of funding.

2.9   Alongside the main studies which have been prioritised for the REA, the review team were signposted to additional studies and reviews. These were considered, however for the purpose of this REA we have maintained a focus on the studies with a national context. Exceptions arose which resulted in us considering additional studies and reviews. The team valued the opportunity to accommodate these requests, and these studies were reviewed in detail. Whilst each of these additional studies were informative in different ways, it was felt that the REA should maintain a focus on the studies which consider national contexts, and therefore fit more readily with the stated aims of the REA and of the review in general. However, it is important to emphasise that these additional studies do offer added value and knowledge in different ways, and may well be included in future phases of the review. The exception here is the assessment of the economic value of Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Arad Research, 2018). This knowledge of has been incorporated into the review as an important factor in the development of a 'Welsh way' which incorporates rigorous mixed methods of research.

Exploring studies from the Republic of Ireland

2.10   The terms of reference for 'Assessment of the economic value of Youth Work' (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2012) were to provide an outline of the economic context within which youth work operates in the Republic of Ireland; to review the research documenting the international and national experience and economic impact of youth work; and to provide a cost benefit analysis of the costs and benefits of youth work in the Republic of Ireland.

2.11   The study, whilst not providing an exact template for the current funding review of youth work in Wales, does illustrate that the economic and social impact of youth work can be estimated by using a CBA approach. There are, therefore, some key elements with regards to the methods employed to calculate both the direct and indirect benefits of youth work. Key to this is establishing clarity regarding the breadth of activity which is considered to be youth work. The review of youth work funding in Wales will require clear definition of the types of activity which constitute youth work. The Irish study can therefore help inform the development of an approach which encompasses CBA in highlighting the economic benefits of youth work, notwithstanding that the studies may differ in terms of overall focus in certain respects.

2.12   For contextual purposes, the study puts forward an independent analysis indicating that 53 per cent of young people accessing youth work in the Republic of Ireland are believed to be economically or socially disadvantaged, and that young people there are more at risk of unemployment, NEET status, poverty, and social exclusion than in other EU countries. A rationale for assessing the economic benefits of youth work over the ten-year period covered by the study is also included. Key to this rationale is an estimation of the likely outcomes for the young people who are accessing or participating in justice, health, and welfare related programmes, and subsequent costs to the state if these programmes did not exist.

2.13   The study seeks to provide a CBA of youth work in the Republic of Ireland, assessing the overall return on funding. In doing so it claims to

fill a gap, highlighting the qualitative nature of previous studies. The CBA is split into two areas. These are what are termed direct benefits, comprising the economic value of volunteering and paid employment, and the 'multiplier impacts' of youth organisation expenditure. The second considers indirect benefits, providing details of costs avoided by the state through the very existence of the provision of youth programmes and support, compared with the costs to the state if those programmes and support were not in place. These indirect benefits are subdivided into justice, health, welfare, and education related benefits, giving an idea of the reach of this provision.

2.14   The study then considers what would be the likely outcomes for young people who are participating in justice, health, and welfare related youth programmes, and the costs to the state if these programmes were not available. The 'shadow costs' for these programmes are calculated as 150 per cent of the public service funding provided to the programmes to enable a quantification of the benefits associated with them. A counterfactual or reference model is introduced to estimate the most likely scenario in the absence of programmes or activities. For example, in the case of justice-related programmes this is presented in the form of state savings from costs avoided due to the existence of this provision. This is done be taking the costs of the programmes and comparing them to the cost of 2 per cent of programme participants being admitted to a detention centre (estimated at €5.1 million per annum). For health-related benefits of youth work programmes, an estimate of the state savings from costs avoided due to the provision of health-related programmes is given, by calculating the costs of 4 per cent of participants being admitted to adolescent treatment centres.

Exploring studies from Scotland

2.15   The key purpose of the study 'The Social and Economic Value of Youth Work in Scotland' (YouthLink Scotland, 2016) is outlined as demonstrating the value of youth work and in doing so recognising its true impact relative to other public and voluntary interventions. It seeks also to provide volunteer and professional youth workers with feedback

on the value of their work. Finally, it sets out to highlight further steps that can be taken to identify what particular youth work practices lead to longer term impact.

2.16 The report illustrates that there is some merit in the use of the now almost globally applied SROI methods (de St Croix, 2017), not least in highlighting that youth work makes an economic contribution to a number of public policy areas. In this respect the correlation with the 'Assessment of the economic value of Youth Work' (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2012) study and other similar studies assists in establishing a narrative for the contribution of youth work, and the spheres of public policy in which it is operating. As with the Irish study there is much to take away in terms of developing an approach to quantifying the economic and social value of youth work. The stated limitations in terms of research undertaken stand in contrast to this Welsh Government commissioned study, which seeks to outline a more detailed picture of the provision of youth work in Wales.

2.17 With regard to the scope and limitations of the Scottish study, the authors indicate that it aimed to map out a general position, rather than providing a fully in-depth and robust assessment. The study acknowledges significant challenges, notably that youth work does not have a universal and similar impact on every participant; that defining youth work is difficult, not necessarily in a policy sense, but in terms of the individual experience of it; and that youth work provision has changed over time, so the impact on adults thirty years ago, for example, could potentially be very different from today.

2.18 The study has embraced a number of approaches and methods. These include:

- a survey of adults and their historic experience of youth work
- a review of other SROI youth work studies
- a survey of volunteer youth workers
- desk research
- modelling potential impacts using robust published data.

2.19 The study uses Youth Link Scotland's definition of youth work: 'youth work is an educational practice contributing to young people's learning and development. The young person takes part voluntarily and is recognised as an active partner. The relationship and dialogue between the young person and youth worker is central to the learning process. Youth work takes place in a variety of settings including community venues, uniformed groups, schools, youth cafes and on the street'. A distinction is made between universal and targeted youth work. Universal is where youth workers engage with a wide range of young people from a specific area or around a certain activity, and targeted is where youth workers work with a specific target group who are usually identified as being 'at-risk' in some respect.

2.20 The SROI approach employed by the study seeks to capture all of the costs of the inputs to an intervention, and then to value all of the benefits. In doing so it estimates the broader impacts rather than focusing on meeting specific goals. These outcomes are explored from the perspectives of stakeholders, although recognising that the limited nature of the study meant original research could not be conducted. The study has therefore relied upon reviewing existing studies, which included over twenty evaluation reports using SROI methodology. The report does indicate, however, that some original research was undertaken via a population survey. The survey found that youth work builds a range of soft skills and capabilities, most notably in relation to confidence and motivation. The study claims that youth work has changed the life of 1 in 10 of the Scottish population, in that for a 'significant minority' of more than 1 in 10 adults in Scotland. It also found:

- 13.3 per cent of adults responding to the survey claimed that youth work was very important in achieving their life goals
- increased earnings range attributable to soft outcomes were estimated to be between £4,906 and £6,091 per individual, providing an annual value based on earnings alone of between £2,200 and £3,000 million **(figures expressed as in the original document)**

- the calculation of the total value of youth work in Scotland is £7 for every £1 of public money invested and an overall SROI value ranging between £656 million, and £1,312,000,000 **(figures as expressed in the original document).**

Exploring studies from the European Union

2.21   The study 'Working with Young People: The value of Youth Work in the EU' (European Commission, 2014) acknowledges the need for a better understanding of the contribution made by youth work in the EU, and the value that it has to the lives of young people. It also indicates a scarcity of data relating to youth work across the EU, and has sought to draw upon relevant literature, mapping national contexts, and conducting stakeholder engagement, along with an analysis of successful practice.

2.22   Whilst the study does not attempt to quantify an economic or social value for youth work, it does provide an overview of certain key issues and trends with regard to youth work across a number of European countries, which may be relevant within the Welsh context.

2.23   Those of relevance include some important developments in terms of finance, funding arrangements, and the legal status of youth work within EU member states. This may assist in promoting an understanding of how the evolution of youth work provision in Wales may be subject to wider trends and tendencies more generally. With regards to finance and funding there is a focus upon the sums of money made available for youth work over the previous decade. The report draws upon the work of Fyfe and Moir (2013) who highlight a tendency within the UK for funding mechanisms to become less flexible over time, and linked to measurable outcomes, as well as increasingly targeted to reaching specific groups of young people, often those at risk. The study highlights Jeffs and Smith (2008) in indicating that youth work has had external pressure to organise practice around targets and outcomes. There is a concern expressed that this could lead to a loss of autonomy in youth work practice as funding provisions require more structured activities, greater accountability, and reporting of outcomes.

This report is helpful in indicating certain recent trends in youth work. They include a focus on measurable outcomes and standards, a move towards evidence-based youth work, targeted youth work focusing on specific groups, an emphasis on developing the education and labour market skills of young people, and a greater focus upon intervention-based youth work targeting specific issues faced by young people. An analysis of the then priorities of government youth policies and funding programmes highlighted the following main areas: targeting disadvantaged young people, preventative youth work and youth facilities, ensuring quality youth work, evidence-based practice and developing a system or infrastructure to support youth work.

2.24　Overall, the study indicates the growing importance of youth work and a prominence on the political agenda. From a funding perspective, the study points out changes to funding structures and priorities which have included a stronger emphasis on intervention-based youth work and on specific target groups of young people, or youth work to tackle a specific issue. The report includes specific examples drawn from across EU member states to help illustrate the point that there is a growing emphasis on activities leading to increased educational and employment opportunities. This tendency has led to a disconnect between the stated overall purposes of youth work and its role in fostering social and human capital, according to the authors. The study also highlights the fact that youth organisations often have to compete with each other for funding, and how this may impede collaboration. Additionally, it is highlighted that changes to public funding structures have resulted in the reduction of mainstream services that would have provided for young people, with the expectation that youth work is increasingly being viewed as a way of filling the gap that mainstream services once provided. The study highlights how providing evidence of success in order to access funding, rather than the upfront financing of activities, can be particularly problematic for small organisations that lack the means to pre-finance activities. Again, these findings may be helpful when examining funding arrangements in the Welsh context.

2.25 In terms of the methodology, this consisted of a review of what is already known and what gaps exist in knowledge on the topic of young people in the EU. The national context of youth work was mapped with each member state through an examination of definitions, legal frameworks, the situation of youth workers, the role, value, and impact of youth work. A stakeholder engagement session was held to share knowledge and expertise, and case study examples of initiatives and activities exploring the stories behind their success have been included in the study. To explore the value of youth work in all of the 27 member states, the study considered:

- national reports on youth work with a comprehensive overview of the tradition, development, legal framework, governance structure, and policy framework in relation to youth work, as well as information relating to the role of youth workers, the value and outcomes of youth work in each country
- twenty-seven in depth case studies
- an overview of the critical success factors associated with the case studies
- a set of conclusions on successful youth work practices, policies, programmes.

2.26 This was achieved through a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder consultation, visits to youth provision, and a one-day face-to-face interactive session targeted at youth work experts. Participants were drawn from national governments, representatives of youth organisations and National Governmental Organisations, youth workers, researchers, and representatives of young people. A total of 159 interviews were completed, and there were between three and seven representatives from each member state. The case studies consisted of 14 long case studies and 13 'snapshot' case studies. The purpose here was to identify the critical factors in youth work, understand why they were successful, and how youth work creates added value and under what circumstances youth work is successful. A

set of screening criteria was developed to identify potential case studies, which were then classified according to a three-tier system.

2.27   There is a recognition that the case studies mentioned above do not represent a comprehensive overview of youth work activities in the EU but are an illustration of what is taking place.

2.28   In terms of defining youth work, the study considers that its three core features are that it has a focus on young people, it provides personal development and is based on voluntary participation.

2.29   According to the study, youth work aims to enhance personal development with a particular focus on self-determination, self-confidence, self-esteem, and socialisation. Personal development should foster empowerment, emancipation, tolerance, and responsibility. These result in participation in democratic societies, prevention of risky behaviour, and social inclusion and cohesion.

2.30   The study proposes a typology in order to capture both the types of youth work activity and the focus of youth work. This typology consists of two axes, with the aim of capturing the majority of youth work activity. The first axis is concerned with youth work activities. At one end of the axis is the specific target group, and at the other end are universal services. The second axis is concerned with the objectives of youth work and has at one end of the spectrum a broad goal of personal development and at the other end a focus on very specific issues it wishes to address. An adapted version of this model may prove beneficial for future discussions concerning primary and secondary purpose and targeted and universal provision.

2.31   Interestingly, the study highlights an increase in demand during the decade leading up to publication, with a move towards professionalisation and professionalised youth workers, along with a stronger emphasis on collaboration with other stakeholders. However, the study also indicates a decline over the same period of up-front financing for youth work, and a reduction in the more traditional forms of youth work. Such developments may be worth taking into account

when considering the context of youth work in Wales. The study also highlights a tension, or potential disconnection, between the purpose and mission of youth work on the one hand, and the expectations of outcomes on the other. There is a concern that youth work is increasingly expected to deliver what had previously been undertaken by other policy sectors. Although there is a growing awareness of the possible contribution of youth work the report highlights that funding arrangements have not kept pace with this.

2.32 Hoyla (2012) presents an overview of youth work in Finland, the objectives, legal basis, and evolution through legislative changes. The article illustrates examples of different models of youth work that could be possibly considered as part of a youth work funding review in Wales.

2.33 The point is made early in the article about the importance of voluntary participation of young people as the basis for youth work in Finland. It draws on the work of Siurala (2001), a former Director of Youth in Helsinki, in defining youth work as supporting growth into citizenship and developing the skills for active citizenship by promoting participation in the labour market, cultural life, and public decision making; by creating opportunities for discussing topics such as identity, knowledge and moral issues; and by practising and developing participatory pedagogy.

2.34 Since 1972 there has been specific legislation in place in Finland in relation to youth work, firstly via the *Act on Youth Communities and State Subsidies for Municipal Youth Work*. This encompassed Municipal Youth Committees operating at grass roots level, provincial youth work committees as expert bodies, and National Youth Committees sitting under the Ministry of Education. Under the Act, state subsidies for organising youth work were secured for local authorities. These state subsidies covered salaries for youth workers, rental costs for youth facilities, and costs related to the construction and upkeep of youth facilities. Finnish legislation allows local authorities to determine the organisation of youth work, with subsidies only partially covering the costs of this.

2.35 Nieminen (2007) presents an underpinning theoretical framework for youth work in Finland, drawing on several key authors. It describes the primary function of youth work as socialisation, helping young people to become members of society and culture. A second function relates to the identity formation of young people. The third function is to compensate for any inadequacies encountered in the first two functions, and the fourth function is in relation to resourcing and allocation. The study then draws upon the work of Haimalainen (2007) in highlighting the importance of social pedagogy in offering a solid theoretical foundation for youth work. The point is made that educational activities are a characteristic feature of socio-pedagogical methodology in supporting individuals, communality, self-reflection, and the principles of experiential learning.

2.36 The role of youth work, therefore, is important in emphasising the relationship between the learner and the surrounding world and can be of valuable support to young people's personal development and their formal education at school. Social participation and life management are an integral part of active citizenship and the adoption of democratic principles. Moreover, Haimalainen (2007) situates youth education within the context of positive psychology in its support for personal growth aimed at building an identity. The study also refers to the importance of the concept of normalisation in social pedagogy, as a means of restoring opportunities for young people who may have lost control of their lives or who are facing other problems (Eriksson and Markstrom, 2000). All of these elements, the paper argues, are essential facets of youth work and youth education. The paper highlights the availability of different routes for attaining professional qualifications through graduate, postgraduate, and vocational programmes. Those that become professionally qualified are expected to be able to instruct, inspire, motivate, and educate, as well as to organise goal-oriented and experiential activities (Makela, 2006). The study concludes that the development of legislation governing youth work has laid the foundation for today's youth work in Finland.

Exploring Studies from Wales

2.37 'Research to inform the development of the Youth Work strategy' was commissioned by the Welsh Government and conducted by Wavehill Consulting in 2020. The research had two main or 'high level' objectives. The first was to promote an understanding of the nature of effective youth work interventions. This involved gathering and presenting up to date evidence about the variety and quality models of youth work practice that exits across Wales. The second objective was to work with the Interim Youth Work Board in developing a theory of change for the youth work strategy based upon the knowledge gained through the first objective.

2.38 The findings outlined in this study demonstrated a need to undertake a funding review of youth work in Wales. It highlighted disparities across local authorities regarding the nature of youth work provision and funding available and issues relating to availability of funding. The study developed a theory of change which it argued identified several of the perceived priorities that needed to be considered to support the development of a more sustainable delivery model for youth work in Wales.

2.39 The study employed a mixed methods approach including interviews with key stakeholders and findings from desk-based research. In total 60 in-depth interviews were undertaken with stakeholders, three theory of change workshops were held with members of the Interim Youth Work Board, Strategy participation Groups, and Task and Finish groups, and a further two theory of change workshops held with representatives of young people. A literature review focusing on key research themes was undertaken, as well as a review of data from the sector collected by the Welsh Government.

2.40 One of the key findings of the research was that there was an incomplete picture in relation to the nature of youth work provision in Wales. Although establishing an overview of the maintained sector was possible, gaining a comprehensive understanding about what was being delivered across the voluntary sector was much more

challenging. Consequently, the study issued a recommendation regarding the need for the Welsh Government to expand the scope of the data collected regarding youth work in Wales to include all youth work organisations.

2.41   The picture established of the maintained sector revealed some disparity across local authorities regarding the amount and nature of youth work provision, the number of young people being engaged, and the amount of funding available to sustain it. There was a marked disparity in Welsh language youth work provision, where some local authorities offered all their provision through the medium of Welsh and others did not have any. The study made a recommendation to incorporate information regarding levels of Welsh language provision within data collected by the Welsh Government.

2.42   Issues relating to the availability of funding were highlighted through the stakeholder interviews, the study indicates, especially in the wake of reductions in funding. This left many feeling that they were being asked to do more with less. The study indicated some frustration on the part of stakeholders with regards to the growing emphasis on targeted work, to the detriment of universal youth work provision. Although, the study did reveal that the majority of stakeholders were content with definitions of youth work included in documents such as Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes and in the National Occupational Standards (NOS). The report advances a recommendation, based on this evidence, regarding the commissioning of research into the contribution made by universal youth work, but with the proviso that this would act as a basis to justify expenditure on it, in the first instance.

2.43   The study then recommends the implementation of measures by the Welsh Government to ensure a consistent universal youth offer is available across Wales. Issues in relation to the coordination of local delivery of youth work were highlighted, in particular following the discontinuation of strategic forums such as the Children and Young Peoples Partnerships. The report puts forward a recommendation for the Welsh Government to consider how this may be best improved.

2.44   The theory of change developed as part of the research process and
        the workshops resulted in the identification of a number of the
        perceived priorities needed to support a more sustainable delivery
        model for youth work in Wales. The first of these advocated
        strengthening the legislative basis for youth work. A key aspect of this
        included the *ring fencing* of funding aimed at universal youth work. It
        also included establishing minimum standards for youth work delivery
        to be adhered to by local authorities.

2.45   The formation of a National Representative Body for youth work and
        securing the role of the Interim Board were identified as key aspects of
        the leadership required for the sector. The Representative Body would
        operate at a national level on behalf of the maintained and voluntary
        sectors. The Representative Body's role would be to ensure greater
        coordination, the commissioning of youth work delivery, having
        responsibility for quality assurance, workforce development, and for
        accessing external funding. On a more local level, improved
        coordination of youth service delivery and improved cooperation
        between local authorities and voluntary sector organisations was seen
        as a priority. With regard to the youth work workforce, areas of priority
        included a focus on ensuring it was suitably developed to deliver high
        quality youth work, and that the workforce reflects the diverse
        demography of Wales. Other priorities focussed on the improved use of
        data to fill gaps in provision to meet local need and improve the
        planning and resourcing of provision and ensuring that young people
        were involved at the strategic level.

2.46   The aim of the assessment of the economic value of Urdd Gobaith
        Cymru (Arad Research, 2018) was to demonstrate the national
        economic value of the Urdd, across a range of the organisation's
        activities. These include the Urdd Eisteddfod, the Sports Department,
        the Maes Department focussing on regional and community activity,
        and the three centres at Llangrannog, Glan-llyn, and Cardiff. This report
        advocates that quantifying the social impacts and economic benefit of
        youth work by the Urdd, while not the focus of their research, could

potentially be a focus for further study. The study is thus useful in establishing indicators that can be used to evaluate economic effectiveness of activities of a large voluntary organisation.

2.47 The methodology employed examined three categories of economic value. The first was related to direct impacts, encompassing direct spending in relation to core activities of Urdd departments on goods, services, and staff salaries. It then considered indirect impacts, focussing on the income and spending generated by the Urdd's local and national Eisteddfodau, the organisation's sporting activities, clubs and competitions, and the centres. Finally, the study considered stimulated impacts, or the contributions to income and spending through the organisation's supply chain, as a result of its core activities. The calculation of economic impact was undertaken through the application of the Keynesian Multiplier Effect, considering the income generated for other businesses as a result of spending by the Urdd. The report argues that the economic value figures derived from this assessment reflect the greatest economic impact that the organisation's contribution to the economy is expected to create.

2.48 The findings were based upon the 2017/18 financial year except for the Urdd Eisteddfod which was taken from data from visitors to the 2018 festival in Brecon and Radnor. The study includes primary and secondary research, income and spending data from the Urdd and local regions, a survey of suppliers, a staff survey, and a survey of visitors to the 2018 Urdd Eisteddfod. The expenditure data was used to identify the direct impact in Wales as well as in the centres' local areas. Eisteddfod visitor numbers and central spending data, in addition to an estimate of visitor spending in Urdd centres, sporting activities and local eisteddfod were also considered.

2.49 Data from the Urdd staff survey was used to estimate the proportion of income received that was spent in Wales and in their local areas. Spending data was collected from sixty-seven of the 238 Urdd suppliers based in Wales, and 73 of the 305 staff members.

2.50   The study highlights other wider impacts of Urdd activity, noting
        contributions made to a range of government policy objectives, in
        particular strategic priorities for the promotion of the Welsh Language.
        Although this does not form part of an economic value calculation, the
        report indicates clear social value to a number of the Cymraeg 2050
        [strategy objectives](). These include promoting the use of the Welsh
        language amongst children and young people in a wide range of
        cultural, social and recreational contexts; encouraging positive
        language practices amongst children and young people; providing
        opportunities for children and families to use the Welsh language
        outside of the school; developing the Welsh language skills of the youth
        work workforce; and ensuring the availability of a wide range of
        Welsh-medium cultural and recreational activities.

2.51   The report underlines that youth work is a key aspect of Urdd activity,
        noting that calculating its economic value rests beyond the scope of the
        study. It does however present a range of studies, many of which are
        covered by this review, that argue this aspect should be considered
        when assessing the value of the Urdd to the Welsh economy. Potential
        contributions may include reducing the risk of exclusion, youth
        unemployment, youth crime, and educational underachievement
        amongst young people in Wales. It advocates that quantifying the
        social impacts and economic benefit of youth work by the Urdd could
        potentially be a focus for further study. The study also highlights Urdd
        activity in relation to apprenticeships for young people, indicating that
        thirty-six young people were employed as apprentices in 2017/18, with
        a target of increasing this number to one hundred by 2022, becoming
        the main provider of Welsh medium apprenticeships in Wales.

2.52   The Wrexham and Flintshire Inspire Project (Wrexham and Flintshire
        County Councils 2021) supports young people aged 11-18 years with
        self-harming behaviours. Its primary focus is equipping young people
        with the knowledge and skills to stay safe, building resilience and
        wellbeing.

2.53　The project began in 2006 as a partnership between the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Wrexham County Borough Council. It was funded by the Big Lottery Fund. It applied youth work approaches to supporting young people admitted to the Maelor Hospital because of self-harming behaviours or suicide risks. The project youth workers worked closely with hospital staff and CAMHS, with support from the project continuing into the community after discharge from hospital. The project has evolved and now includes programme delivery within schools and support for young people with managing diabetes. Funding from Flintshire County Council now enables Inspire to support young people from Flintshire.

2.54　The methodology adopted by Wrexham and Flintshire local authorities to evaluate the project illustrates the possibilities of alternative models of assessing social value and impact within the youth work sector. The costing typology is designed to demonstrate impact and social value for a range of interventions employing the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) [methodology](#) to give an overall 'feel' for return on investment. The development of the GMCA model has been supported by a range of central government departments (GMCA, 2023), and was adopted as supplementary guidance to HM Treasury's Green Book (gov.uk) in 2014. The methodology has the advantage of encompassing the unit cost database, which is quality assured and updated regularly, with oversight provided by central government departments (GMCA, 2023).

2.55　The qualitative and quantitative data indicated considerable outcomes for young people. These included:

- improving confidence and self-esteem of young people
- reduced incidents of self harm and hospital admissions for reasons of self-harm
- young people equipped with the 'know how' to manage risk
- enabling young people to engage in group activities
- helping young people to overcome phobic impulses and anxieties that limit day to day functioning and progression

- better managing young peoples' emotions and improved relationships with family

- young people with histories of anti-social behaviour or substance misuse needs attributing positive changes to engagement with Inspire.

2.56 Quantitative methods encompassed a survey of young people who had been involved in the project to gather views on outcomes and any areas for improvement. A desk-based review of monitoring data and previous evaluation reports was also undertaken. A survey tool was developed to collect data on 20 young people. This was done to inform the development of the costing analysis in the first instance, but also to triangulate insights about outcomes attributable to Inspire, and changes in mood, cognitive and behavioural functioning.

2.57 The costing analysis provides a 'feel' for return on investment. It considers specific hard outcomes e.g. changes in hospital admissions, drug and alcohol misuse, reduced incidences of self-harm, or taking up employment or education opportunities. It attributes changes to the input of Inspire. The evaluation states that the figure is conservative because it only considers successfully closed cases, and not any outcomes that occur during casework, or cases closed for other reasons. Data relating to the effects of emotional wellbeing programmes delivered in schools, and improving financial resilience within families are also not included. Data regarding ambulance call outs is not included. In terms of measuring changes in mood and behavioural functioning, the project employed the Coping Scale for Children and Youth (CSCY), repeating baseline assessments at the time of case closure. Improvements in problem solving, in mood, take up of support services, and reductions in behavioural avoidance were highlighted. Other project outcomes included reduction in drug and alcohol use, reduction in hospital admissions, for self-harm, and reductions in admission to Tier 4 mental health services.

2.58 The costing typology employed is that of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the Troubled families

calculator. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) unit cost database was updated in the Summer of 2022. It was first developed in 2012 to assist partners in reforming the way in which they deliver public services. It contains costs across several themes including crime, education and skills, employment and economy, environment, fire, health, housing, and social services. The costs are broken down into three types of values:

- Fiscal value: costs on values that fall to public sector agencies and relate to public expenditure.
- Economic value: costs or savings that fall to individuals, employees, or the wider economy.
- Social value: wider gains to individuals and/or society, such as improvements in health and wellbeing, reduced air pollution or improved environmental outcomes, better access to transport or public services, and increased safety/reduced crime.

2.59   The report gives a consistent view of Inspire as contributing to significant positive outcomes for young people, emerging from both the qualitative and quantitative data. This message is reinforced in the analysis of the monitoring reports and what are termed 'deep dive' analyses of 20 closed cases.

2.60   The evaluation reported that the project contributed to increasing self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging. These themes also emerged through interviews with the project team and partner organisations, which also evidenced improving mood, reducing anxiety, socialising and making friends.   Participants identified the friendliness and trustworthiness of the workers, and their ability to engage rapidly with young people as key strength of the project. For the young people, this was regarded as a distinguishing feature of the project, compared to other services that they had accessed. Adopting a young person led approach, whilst at the same time recognising and nurturing young people's strength, abilities and interests, alongside the voluntary nature of engagement also emerged as strengths.

Conclusions

2.61 Although the EU study highlights a general trend towards targeted work, which is reinforced by many of the other studies, this targeted work appears to lend itself more readily to efforts to quantify the contribution of youth work, rather than universal youth work. Regarding the latter in particular, evidence of impact and economic value is rare, and this appears to remain a significant challenge for the sector. The studies have illustrated the contribution of youth work across areas of public policy. However, the absence of sufficient data regarding the impact of universal youth work in comparison to targeted work, may see a continuation of that trend towards what is more straightforward for policy makers to quantify, when responding to scrutiny regarding pressures on the public purse.

2.62 In addition to this contrast in the means of quantifying universal provision and targeted intervention, the point is made in several studies regarding the role of the youth service in compensating for cuts to other services. This can be seen as an illustration of the flexibility and adaptability of a service which is young person-centred and led.

2.63 Whilst there is some headline data included in the Irish study regarding the needs of young people in the Republic of Ireland, in comparison with other EU member states, there is little exploration as to whether the funding allocated is sufficient to secure appropriate provision to meet those needs. The study does not consider the relationship between youth work and the Gaelic language or explore how one impacts upon the use of the other. This is a dimension of youth work which is of particular significance in Wales and appears to inform the development of a particular approach to reflect its uniqueness in relation to youth work delivery which should be considered in relation to the Urdd assessment of economic value (2018). The Urdd report indicates clear social value to several of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy objectives and advocates that quantifying the social impacts and economic benefit of youth work by the Urdd could potentially be a focus for further study.

2.64   The EU study is helpful in highlighting which EU member states have a
        more secure and legally grounded status of youth work, alongside
        general information regarding sources of funding across the EU
        member states. The scope of the study does not allow for any in-depth
        exploration of the adequacy of funding allocations, nor what would be
        considered sufficient to sustain both universal and targeted provision
        within each of the EU member states. However, Finland's approach to
        funding through hypothecation of its youth services and its centrality
        within education policy is considered worthy of further exploration when
        considering funding of youth services in Wales.

2.65   A small number of studies focus upon quantifying the economic value
        of youth work using methodologies such as CBA and SROI, and factor
        in volunteer time. In some cases, the calculation is estimated over an
        extended time frame. However, the studies do not consider issues of
        the longer-term sustainability of current youth work delivery and funding
        models, or how they may be improved. Decision making processes
        regarding funding allocation at national, regional, and local level are not
        covered in depth by the studies, for example how data is used to
        identify areas of priority, and how these align with strategic plans,
        needs assessments, and policy objectives.

2.66   Where the reviews do highlight the role of funding mechanisms from a
        Welsh perspective clear recommendation are made that there should
        be an understanding of the mechanisms of funding and strategic
        oversight of youth work. In addition, the potential, in future, to explore
        economic and social impact in the voluntary and maintained sector in
        Wales.

2.67   The role of young people in decision making on the allocation of
        funding appears as a prominent theme in only a minority of studies.
        Within the Welsh Government research study this aspect is given a
        greater focus, in accordance with the key principles of youth work in
        Wales underpinned by the UNCRC.

2.68   Several studies do refer to the impact of the financial crisis, combined
        with public policy decisions regarding reductions in funding to youth

work organisations. However, this is not covered in detail by any of the studies, nor are questions of the role of non-state funded organisations, such those within the voluntary sector, in plugging subsequent gaps in provision.

2.69 These themes of the adequacy of funding and the mechanisms for the allocation of funding at national and local levels are both areas which may be explored in detail in all phases of this review. The scope of the study enables this in-depth exploration. It also enables the exploration of themes such as the involvement of young people in the decision-making process regarding funding for youth work in Wales, and the impact reductions in public finance for youth work. The pragmatic mixed methods approach being adopted by the research team allows for not only quantitative analysis regarding financial issues relating to the way in which youth work in Wales is funded. It also, through use of qualitative methods, allows for an understanding of the local picture in relation to the ways in which the youth service is financially sustained. The study is also able to explore funding for youth work within the voluntary sector at both national and local levels, seeking to better understand the range and diversity of funding sources across both voluntary and maintained sectors. In doing so, it will reflect the views and experiences of key decision makers, as well as those services users, and service managers, impacted by their decisions. The studies considered within this REA offer much in terms of establishing a narrative of the contribution of youth work across a number of areas of public policy. There are aspects from each of them that can help inform and shape the approach taken to this review of youth work funding. The breadth and depth proposed for this study, and the tailoring of a particular approach to the circumstances of youth work in Wales, is governed by the diversity of young people in Wales, including their linguistic diversity, and their needs. It is also responding to the way in which youth services have evolved on a national and local level throughout the period since devolution. It is therefore very much a 'Welsh way': an approach which in the first instance seeks to use genuine mixed methods of social research combining qualitative and

quantitative methods to understand the current financial arrangements in relation to youth work. In doing so, the research will promote an understanding of an appropriate funding architecture which would allow youth services to securely deliver a high-quality service to young people in accordance with its core values.

3. Methodology

Overview

3.1   This section outlines the methodological frameworks and methods of data collection for the feasibility study.

3.2   The overarching methodological framework adopted for undertaking the feasibility study was a pragmatic research design (Creswell, 2017; Feilzer, 2010) which involves utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection in addition to the use of multiple methods of data collection, thus providing a robust set of data that allows an examination of the complex, dynamic, and social processes in a real-world scenario:

> 'The primary goal of pragmatism is to create practical knowledge that has utility for action for making purposeful difference in practice' (Goldkuhl 2012, cited in Kaushik and Walsh, 2019, p11).

3.3   The multiple methods of data collection adopted in this study were:

- qualitative interviews and focus groups
- the administration of a survey and qualitative and quantitative analysis of responses
- quantitative secondary data analysis of the annual Welsh Government Youth Work statistical [release](#) (hereby referred to as the 'annual statistical release') Strategic Voluntary Youth Work Organisation (SVYWO) grant allocations and Youth Support Grant allocations.

3.4   All the studies reviewed within the REA demonstrate that the aims of the research studies vary and use different theoretical frameworks for analysis.

Feasibility Study

3.5   To address the aims of the feasibility study, research was undertaken in a sample of four local authority areas. The local authority areas involved in the feasibility study were as follows:

  i. Wrexham
  ii. Powys
  iii. Swansea
  iv. Newport.

3.6   These areas represented different contexts in Wales – rural, urban, and suburban, and a range of geographical areas across Wales. This work covered both local authorities and a sample of voluntary sector organisations at a local and national level. Additional interviews were carried out with a Welsh Government official and a representative from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).

3.7   There is no exhaustive directory of youth work provision in the given areas and as such it is difficult to quantify the entire scale of provision in an area. Our sample strategy was exploratory and was agreed with officials and our steering group. The original sampling strategy aimed to target four projects within each maintained youth service and four voluntary sector organisations operating within each local authority area, to reach a total sample of 32 in total It proved challenging to access voluntary organisations in Powys, with representatives in a small number of instances declining to participate citing lack of capacity and workload. However, where VSOs were contacted in this area and their local organisation representative unable to participate, their national representative instead took part. Additional interviews were also held with Welsh Government officials, WLGA and national voluntary organisations (Figure 3.1b).

Figure 3.1: Actual Research Participants - Interview / Focus Group/Survey

Local Authority Area	Voluntary Sector Organisation	Maintained Youth Service Provision
Powys	Interviewed national organisations due to challenges of smaller VSO organisation being able to engage in research.	- Powys LA universal team - Powys LA management and finance - Powys LA senior managers - Powys inclusion team
Wrexham	- Wrexham VSO: The Venture - Wrexham VSO Youth and Play Partnership - Wrexham EYST	- Wrexham LA youth service management - Wrexham LA youth workers
Swansea	- Swansea MAD - Swansea YMCA - Swansea Mixtup - Swansea EYST	- Swansea LA Hub (operational) - Swansea LA Early Help Hub Manager - Swansea LA Finance officers - Swansea LA Leadership team
Newport	- Newport Live - Newport Mind - Newport Maindee House - Newport EYST	- Newport LA (Leadership team) - Newport LA (Operational team)
Totals	11	12

Note: each participated in at least one research activity - survey, interview, focus group

Figure 3.1b: Sample - Interview / Focus Group, Additional Interviews

Additional Interviews (7)
Welsh Government official
WLGA representative
CWVYS (national representative)
Urdd Gobaith Cymru (national representative)
Duke of Edinburgh's Award (national representative)
Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales (national representative)
EYST (national representative)

3.8   The feasibility study mapped the information provided within each local authority area for both the maintained and voluntary sectors. The information provided by the different sectors has been triangulated to consider the quality and relevance of the information to effectively answer the research brief.

3.9   To consider accountability of the funding available/spent on youth work in Wales, this study explored how decisions on funding and spend are made through the following questions:

- Who within a local authority or VSO signs off expenditure?
- How might they map the needs to ensure it aligns and appropriate budget allocated?
- How do young people help to shape the budget?
- To identify systems of accountability for youth work funding allocations - governance and leadership.
  - Particularly for the VSO: How do they ensure they are able to successfully deliver for potential funders.
  - How they make decisions about what funding to seek core funded/member funded/ all public sector / charitable sources.
  - How the organisations access funding at a local, regional and national level, including competitive bidding.
  - Identify any challenges for accessing funding both at a local, regional and national level. Explore additional funding sources such as charitable funding that are accessed by organisations.
  - Where appropriate consider reporting and evaluation mechanisms that identify social value of spend.

Ethics/GDPR

3.10   In all respects, the research has been designed to comply with research protocols outlined in The BERA Charter for Research Staff in Education (2012) and Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2018). All research undertaken by the research team complies with current ethical standards, including informed consent, anonymity, privacy, right to withdraw, and respect for the individual. Full ethical

approval for the research has been approved through The University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Wrexham Glyndŵr Ethical Committees and adheres to GDPR policies.

3.11   Furthermore, the research team is fully committed to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore, acknowledging the power and legitimacy of the children and young people's voice (Dahlberg and Moss, 2004; Hammersley, 2015) for example through ensuring that children and young people's active and informed consent is attained.

Quantitative Methods

3.12   A variety of quantitative methods have been employed in this feasibility study. The quantitative review focuses on the available datasets from the annual statistical release applying to the maintained sector only and not including the voluntary sector, the annual statistical release presents detailed information about the statutory (described as maintained in this study) youth work sector in Wales (Welsh Government, 2022). YSG and SVYWO grant allocations are also considered. Furthermore, a survey was created to investigate the current funding provided to the maintained and voluntary sectors in the sample areas.

3.13   Descriptive statistics have been employed in investigating the annual statistical release data between financial years 2010-11 and 2021-22. The descriptive review will allow this study to investigate the longitudinal financial and economic trends within the maintained youth work sector. Due to there being a small sample size within the feasibility study, fixed effect panel data models and difference-in-difference estimation methods will not be effective in estimating a causal relationship. A descriptive review approach is utilised for the analysis of the YSG and SVYWO. This allows the team to understand how the current grants are being allocated to this sector, and what the likely impacts are for these organisations.

3.14   Both qualitative and quantitative methods are employed within the survey, survey and interview scripts can be found at Annex B and C. The survey was sent to 24 organisations spread equally between the four local authority areas, 11 voluntary sector organisations and 13 maintained sector organisations. In total, 8 responses were received, therefore the response rate was one third. The majority (6) of respondents were from the maintained sector, which does not provide a sufficiently representative response from the voluntary sector. Furthermore, due to the small sample size of the survey, the results are likely to be impacted by the sample bias of respondents who have completed the survey. However, the results of the survey have been collated and the figures are reported in the quantitative results section. The results of the above three quantitative review areas are reported in Section 4.

Qualitative Methods

3.15   Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were adopted as the main methods of qualitative data collection with both the voluntary and maintained sectors. Annex C outlines the interview/focus group questions for both the voluntary and the maintained sectors.

Figure 3.2 Number of interviews, focus groups and participants

	Number held (n)	Voluntary sector participants (n)	Maintained sector participants (n)
Interviews	22	10	10
Focus groups	8	6	14

3.16   Figure 3.2 presents the breakdown of the interview and focus group representation from the voluntary and maintained sectors. Data from focus groups and interviews illustrated in Figure 3.2 were recorded using MS Teams and voice recorders, researchers also made notes of significant points during the interviews and focus groups. After the

interviews, the recordings were checked and cleaned for clarity before being analysed following the process below.

Data Analysis

3.17 Braun and Clarke's (2022; 2006) thematic analysis approach was adopted for analysing the qualitative data. This involves six phases of analysis outlined below.

- **Familiarising yourself with the dataset**: This phase involves reading and re-reading the data, to become immersed and intimately familiar with its content, and making notes on your initial analytic observations and insights, both in relation to each individual data item (e.g., an interview transcript) and in relation to the entire dataset.

- **Coding**: This phase involves generating succinct labels (codes) that capture and evoke important features of the data that might be relevant to addressing the research question. It involves coding the entire dataset, with two or more rounds of coding, and after that, collating all the codes and all relevant data extracts, together for later stages of analysis.

- **Generating initial themes**: This phase involves examining the codes and collated data to begin to develop significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). It then involves collating data relevant to each candidate theme, so that you can work with the data and review the viability of each candidate theme.

- **Developing and reviewing themes**: This phase involves checking the candidate themes against the coded data and the entire dataset, to determine that they tell a convincing story of the data, and one that addresses the research question. In this phase, themes are further developed, which sometimes involves them being split, combined, or discarded. In our TA approach, themes are defined as pattern of shared meaning underpinned by a central concept or idea.

- **Refining, defining, and naming themes**: This phase involves developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each theme, determining the 'story' of each. It also involves deciding on an informative name for each theme.

- **Writing up**: This final phase involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts and contextualising the analysis in relation to existing literature.

3.18 A coding book, which comprises a set of predetermined themes has been developed to aid analysis in line with good thematic analysis practice (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2022; 2023) ([Annex D](#)). The coding book was informed by the WG suggested themes from the specification document, annual statistical release data, and the steering group. Each data set was analysed twice, once through deductive analysis using the codes and themes identified in advance, and once through inductive open coding to identify any **additional themes.** The data set will consist of the transcriptions from the interviews and focus groups.

4. Findings

Quantitative Findings

4.1 The quantitative findings presented below review the current economic trends in youth work funding in both the voluntary and maintained sectors. Descriptive statistics are provided based on the current publicly available datasets, including the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The RSG is distributed from Welsh Government to Local Authorities, as part of The Local Government Finance Settlement. The RSG is calculated based on a formula to take account of factors such as populations, demographics and rurality. LA's spend their RSG budget in accordance with their own priorities. The following section of the report outlines the quantitative findings from three areas: Firstly, the review of the annual statistical release detailing the maintained youth work sector in Wales and published by the Welsh Government. Secondly, primary data analysis from the survey undertaken during this feasibility study. Thirdly, a review of the YSG and SVYWO grant allocations given. It is clear from the limited survey returns from voluntary sector organisations that our survey results provide limited data on which to base findings.

Annual Statistical Release data

4.2 The annual statistical release data collates yearly maintained youth work sector data from each local authority in Wales. There have been two administrators for the annual audit. The Local Government Data Unit collected annual youth work data to 31 March 2010, and the Knowledge and Analytical Services of the Welsh Government have organised the data collection from 1 April 2010 onwards. Data collected prior to 2010-11 is not comparable to current arrangements. The data collection undertaken by the Local Government Data Unit allowed for members to be included in their 'reach' numbers (the number of young people engaged within the youth work provision compared to the total youth population). Reach has been defined as 'young people registered on local authority Reach systems as active during the year' (Welsh Government, 2022, p. 2). Survey data from the 2010-11 wave onwards

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stipulates that local authorities must only include young people who are registered on the Reach system. Therefore, for this survey our sample period of this review has taken into account the financial years from 2010-11 to 2021-22 inclusive.

4.3   The annual statistical release data for the four local authority areas included in this feasibility stage - Wrexham, Powys, Swansea and Newport – were reviewed in this study. Values reported in the annual statistical release data are nominal values and are affected by inflation. Therefore, all nominal values reported in the annual statistical release have been adjusted to real values using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by the Office for National Statistics, with 2015 reselected to be the base year, due to having a stable level of inflation on which to base subsequent analysis. The real value will be used from this point onwards and Annex E contains the figures based on the adjusted data. The individual variables utilised in this review follow the definitions outlined by the annual statistical release.

4.4   Income trends were reviewed for each local authority between 2010-11 and 2021-22. The figures shown in Annex E provide a detailed breakdown of the analysis undertaken. From that analysis, for the purposes of this report we highlight that the first trend shows a reduction in income from all local authority departments to support youth work. For example, in figure E.1.2. Powys exhibits a large rise in departmental funding between 2012-13 and 2015-16, peaking at £407,830 in 2015-16. The large increases are driven by Social Service funding representing 79.3 per cent of their funding. The subsequent decline is also driven by Social Services income being cut from £342,861 in 2016-17 to £1,850 in 2017-18. A trend of increasing funding can be seen in Figure E.1.3, total national sources, where funding over the sample period increases for all LAs. This was driven by increases in funding from Families First and YSG.

4.5   Table 4.1 below reports the real compound annual growth rates in income for both segmented (various local authority departments) and aggregated maintained sector income funding. Within the sample, real

core funding (that is, funding allocated for youth work services from LA's departmental budgets, excluding external sources and after adjusting for inflation) has reduced on average by 8.77 per cent each year between 2010-11 and 2021-22. All maintained youth services in the sample had a reduction in core funding from the local authority, with Newport having the largest reduction across the sample period at 13.38 per cent, and Wrexham having the lowest yearly reduction in core funding at 3.05 per cent. Funding from local authority departments (which include Education, Leisure, Social Services, Chief Executive, and Housing) for youth services was seen to be quite volatile across the four local authorities within this sample. For example, Swansea received approximately £80,000 in departmental funding in total across the three years between 2011-1 and 2013-14, which has been reduced to £0 thereafter. Wrexham and Newport have growth in departmental funding year-on-year with growth rates of 5.29 and 3.23 per cent respectively. This growth in funding primarily stems from Education which provides substantial funds within both local authorities.

Table 4.1: Real compound annual growth rates in income funding (2010-11 to 2021-22)

Local Authority	Core Youth Service Budget	Total Local Authority Departments	Total other income sources	Total national sources	Lottery Income	Any other sources	Total Income
Swansea	-8.03%	-100.00%	-	4.28%	-	-	1.08%
Wrexham	-3.05%	5.29%	8.38%	-0.28%	-100%	-	-2.84%
Powys	-10.60%	-19.54%	-100%	13.07%	-	-21.96%	-2.25%
Newport	-13.33%	3.23%	-27.45%	-3.67%	-	-	-6.63%
Average	-8.77%	-27.76%	-45.28%	3.35%	-	-	-2.66%

Note, average value of Total other income. Source: All values calculated by the authors from the annual statistical release on the maintained youth work sector in Wales.

4.6   The average real total income across local authorities has reduced year on year by 2.66 per cent between 2010-11 and 2021-22. Based on the above analysis this is primarily driven by the real reduction in core funding as aforementioned. Increases in funding through national sources and departmental sources reduce the overall impact on the reduction in core income. Newport has had the largest yearly reduction in total income at 6.63 per cent, compared to Swansea which had a yearly increase of 1.07 per cent. The differences in income levels is likely to affect youth work provisions.

4.7   We illustrate the LA departmental income as a percentage of total departmental income in [Annex E.5]. The departmental income is split into four areas: education, leisure, social services, and other and may be influenced by which directorate contains the maintained youth service. Both Swansea and Newport authorities saw varying departmental incomes across the years; education provides the largest share of departmental income, frequently accounting for over 80 per cent of the total departmental funding. Conversely, Wrexham and Powys received funding from each of the four areas listed above in a variety of proportions across the sample period. Wrexham's funding profile has a high variance with different allocations each year.

4.8   The figures in [Annex E.6] show other sources of income for each local authority within this sample, including from Health, the Police, Town and Community Councils, Youth Offending teams, Substance Misuse, and other sources. Unfortunately, the greatest proportion of funding is often allocated as 'other sources' meaning analysis of the detail of funding sources is challenging. Finally, police and substance misuse has become a larger provider of funds since 2017-18 for both Swansea and Wrexham. Although there could be correlation between the need for this funding, no causation can be shown through descriptive analysis.

4.9   In [Annex E.7] we show the National Source income for each local authority. Within our sample, we see a good diversification of funding streams coming into each local authority, however this is mainly from

various Welsh Government departments. This allows authorities to become less reliant on a single source of funding.

4.10 Expenditure figures taken from the annual statistical release are presented in the Figures in Annex E.3, showing a reduction in most areas of local authority expenditure. This is expected based on the reduction in funding income previously mentioned.

4.11 The expenditure data in Table 4.2 below reports the real compound annual growth rates for each local authority. Total spending between 2010-11- and 2021-22 reduced by 3.54 per cent, with Newport having the largest reduction in expenditure of 6.74 per cent over this period, and Swansea increasing expenditure by 1.55 per cent. Whilst both income and expenditure has reduced across the sample during this period, the proportionate reduction in expenditure is 0.88 percentage points greater than the equivalent reduction in income.

4.12 There are a few possibilities that could explain the difference between income and expenditures falling at different rates. The first is precautionary savings by local authorities, where expenditure is cut at a faster rate than income to ensure they do not run into a deficit. Secondly, due to uncertainties in the level of grant funding that may be awarded local authorities may cut expenses further than income to ensure their current obligations can be met. Finally, other factors such as mandated expenditure cuts, not in relation to income could also drive this difference. Due to the scope of the feasibility study, the correlation and potential causation between income and expenses growth rates will not be researched further here, however, further study will be conducted in Phase 2.

Table 4.2: Compound annual growth rates in expenditure (2010-11 to 2021-22)

Information in Table 4.2 is based on financial year data and all percentages quotes are based on real numbers. Source information is from the annual statistical release.

Local Authority	Swansea	Wrexham	Powys	Newport
Staffing & management expense (%)	2.89	-1.84	0.94	-6.37
Other staffing expenses (%)	-9.55	-6.76	-9.00	-13.59
Staff Training (%)	-3.22	11.44	-6.76	-30.61
Capital Expenditure (%)	-100	-100	-100	-100
Building expenditure (%)	-4.34	5.01	-16.19	-5.96
Resources (%)	-11.62	-12.69	-3.34	-2.55
Grant Aid to Voluntary Sector (%)	-100	9.48	-4.43	-100
Revenue Grant to Partner (%)	21.04	-0.90	-100	-
Total spend (%)	1.55	-3.04	-5.93	-6.74

4.13   The annual return analysis demonstrates that staffing costs have risen by 2.89 per cent and 0.94 per cent for Swansea and Powys respectively and fallen by 1.84 and 6.37 per cent for Wrexham and Newport on an annual basis. The differences in staffing expenditure are attributed to the staffing levels in the respective local authorities (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2 below). Wrexham and Newport between 2010-11 and 2020-21 reduced the number of full-time and part-time staff. Conversely, Swansea has increased the number of full-time staff which correlates with their 2.89 per cent increase in staffing expenses. The average training expenses have reduced annually at 7.3 per cent.

4.14   In terms of the numbers of managers and front-line core workers Powys has the highest variance in manager to front line staff ratios compared to the other local authorities with a loss of 10 managers between 2014-2016. The other local authorities have only slightly changed manager numbers across the sample period, and the numbers stay relatively constant with no large increase or decrease over the sample period. However, the number of front-line core workers have steadily reduced over the sample period between 2010-11 and 2021-22, with minor increases in 2014-15 and 2015-16 for Swansea and Powys. This indicates the core staff to manager ratio has lowered over the last decade, meaning there are less staff per manager.

Figure 4.1: Number of managers working for each local authority
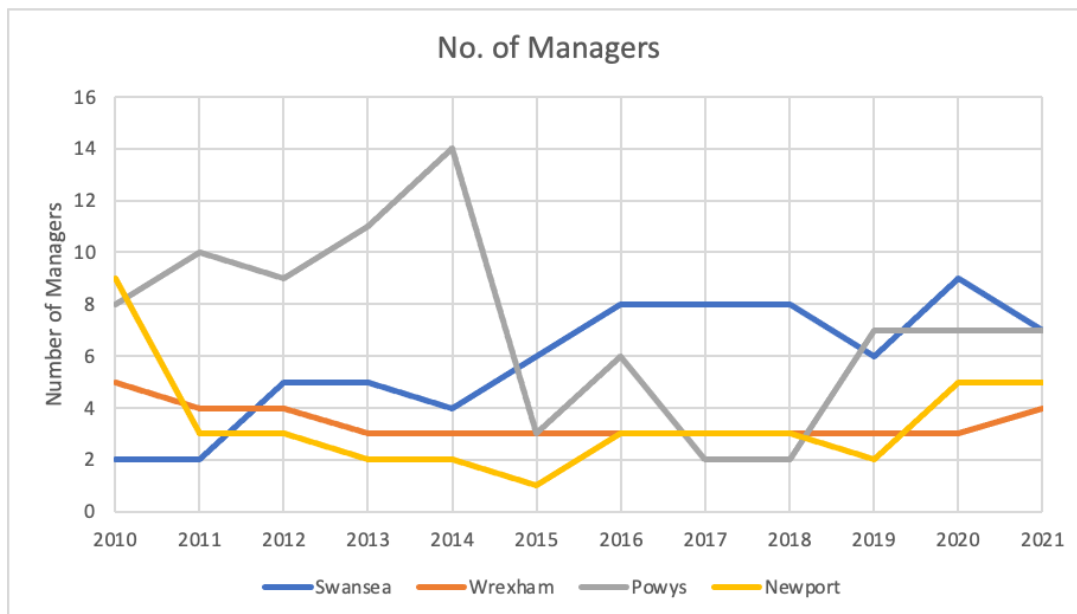
Source information is from the annual statistical release. The year numbers provided are for financial years. For example, 2021 data point is for the 2021-22 financial year.

Figure 4.2: Number of front-line core workers
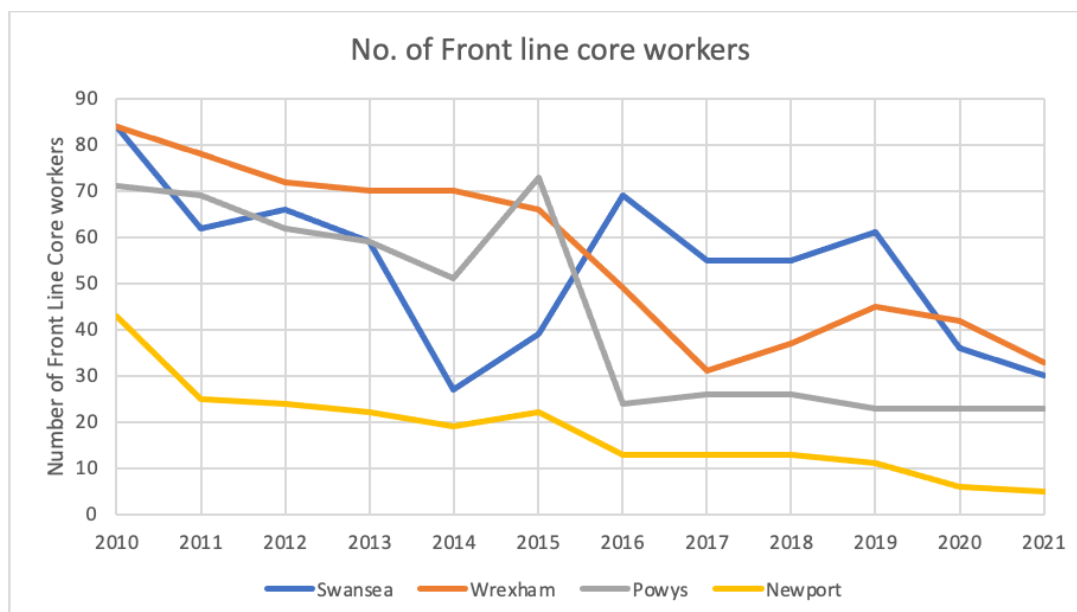
Source information is from the annual statistical release. The year numbers provided are for financial years. For example, 2021 data point is for the 2021-22 financial year.

4.15. Having set out data on staffing and costs, the next section of this report will contain a review of the quantitative survey results.

4.16. The survey shown in Annex B was sent to 24 organisations spread equally between the four local authority areas, 11 voluntary sector organisations and 13 maintained sector organisations. Eight responses were returned and due to the small sample size of the survey, the results are likely to be impacted by which respondents completed the survey. The survey results have a low number of voluntary sector respondents. Therefore, the results are not expected to show a true representation of the voluntary sector. However, the results of the survey have been collated and the figures are reported in the quantitative results section.

4.17. In terms of geographical spread, the responses suggested that most participants work locally, operating regionally, and a minority operate nationally. The majority of participants organise youth clubs which may operate in local community centres, halls or in youth centres. Others operate in schools or colleges. Half of the respondents run 'detached' or 'outreach' provision. These are services running in local communities, without the use of a building; often called "street-based" youth work. Housing support is the least frequently supported service with only half of the organisation noting housing as one of their aims.

4.18. In terms of the stability of funding in Wales, the results suggest that voluntary organisations are more likely to consider funding is unstable as they are more likely to rely on a variety of grants. Responses further indicates that, asked about how they would like to improve stability of funding, respondents indicated that core funding could be increased, and that grant funding means having to change the nature of the work depending on who is providing the funding. (Figures E.8.5 – E.8.7)

> "Core funding is critical but relatively small" (survey respondent)

> "Core funding could be increased further" (survey respondent)

> "We often have to change the service model to meet funding criteria of grants, which are unstable" (survey respondent).

4.19. When asked about sources of information about funding opportunities, organisations cited a range of sources including, Principal Youth Officers, social media, and the Welsh Government/ Local Authorities (Figure E.8.6). Phase 2 will provide further data on this.

4.20. Responses regarding current barriers to grant funding are noted in Figure E.8.7. A wide range of barriers were picked. Respondents noted that the annual cycle of grant funding was sometimes a barrier to a more consistent funding position. Although we note that the Welsh Government are increasingly making grants available on three-year funding cycles. Secondly, the amount of core funding and the time taken to complete grant applications are regarded as the joint second largest barriers to funding among our sample.

Strategic Voluntary Youth Work Organisation Grant

4.21. The Welsh Government Strategic Voluntary Youth Work Organisation Grant provides core funding to voluntary youth work organisations. Data provided by the Welsh Government (but not reported due to confidentiality) outlines the following characteristics. At the time of writing this report, there are 12 organisations who receive funding in 2022-23 and 2023-24. The total nominal fund of £726,598.30 increased by 5.9 per cent to £769,470.29 from 2022-23 to 2023-24. The average award amount is £55,892.18 for each voluntary sector organisation in 2022-23, and £59,190.02 in 2023-24. Due to the small sample size captured in the survey, further investigation into the Strategic Voluntary Youth Work Organisation Grant funding will be conducted in the next phase. Additionally at the time of writing this report, a new additional round of SVWYO grant for up to £300,000 of funding has been opened and this will be covered in the final report.

Qualitative Findings

4.22 Interviews and focus groups were undertaken with representatives of voluntary youth work sector organisations at a local and national level and the maintained sector across the four local authority areas. (Interview respondents were volunteers, practitioners, managers, and senior leaders (see Figure 3.1 above). Figure 3.2 contains a breakdown of the number of interviews, focus groups and participants in each. From the extensive and in-depth qualitative data generated, it has been possible to identify and compare themes across these groups and across areas. A strength of the qualitative methodology was the engagement of the organisations that participated, for example a quote from one voluntary organisation which was noted by several others; also:

> "…we really sincerely hope that our thoughts and comments will be considered…" (interview participant)

4.23 The following section of the report illustrates the qualitative findings that are grouped under the feasibility study overarching themes, these are:

- organisational context
- people
- needs assessment
- funding internal
- wider information
- funding external
- monitoring
- strengths and weaknesses.

Each theme reflects the complex and interlinked picture of issues raised by participants.

Organisational context

4.24 **Theme 1. Organisational Context,—the youth service is a diverse service attempting to respond to the needs of many different stakeholders as varied as the Welsh Government, local**

government, local communities, local and national organisations such as schools, the police service and health services. These varying perspectives mean that the pedagogy of youth work is subject to external influences as it tries to adapt and respond to changing demands. This interview extract highlights some of the changing experiences of young people who become involved in youth work:

> 'Our referral pathway into early help and then their triage should pick up through early identification partnership meetings within the schools, and then that's how young people are picked up' (maintained sector youth worker).

4.25 The changing demands of youth work were highlighted within our review of the annual statistical release, for example in shifts from building based provision to street-based work and this was supported in interviews and focus groups in changes in the locations that youth workers engage with young people. One interviewee described the use of a cost avoidance tool being used to aid the organisation's understanding of the benefits of targeted youth work. A cost avoidance tool is used to assess the reduced costs arising from interventions which for example reduce anti-social behaviour, prevent domestic abuse, reduce school absence and a young person gaining employment. The interviewee noted that:

> 'When we did the cost avoidance tool, we did the cost avoidance tool that came out that there was a cost avoidance of £470,000 just on the two quarters' (maintained sector youth worker).

4.26 Evidence from interviews and focus groups suggests the principles, highlighted in paragraphs 1.12 to 1.16 are being stretched, for example, the range of settings where youth work takes place is becoming increasingly flexible and much of the work is being targeted at young people with specific characteristics rather than being universal or having regard to the holistic development of young people as set out within the NOS. The amount of universal, centre-based work is diminishing in some areas, apparently at the same time as pre-planned and targeted

provision for specific groups in schools and health is increasing. Flexibility in the work was highlighted:

> 'We did a pilot in a village through a container-type activity, you know, so come away from your building. And a robust and adventurous type container, where young people can have a better sense of ownership. They can't damage it. It's impossible but they love that, that robustness of it, that outside feel and what we've done is we have the earlier part of the session is play and then the latter part becomes the youth session and it's the same staff' (voluntary sector leader).

4.27   There is a considerable range of types of youth work taking place, at one end of a continuum of types of work, one interviewee from the voluntary sector noted that:

> 'We are a small kind of community development organisation and what we do is aim to bring people together to create opportunities for youth work, opportunities for new projects, for kids where they live'.

4.28   Evidence from our sample suggests that similarly, in maintained sector contexts, the methods employed by youth workers are shifting, towards more one to one work. This is often in response to the increasing numbers of young people experiencing anxiety and behavioural or emotional difficulties and away from the community-based methods of youth work, of group work, arts and culture and sport or physical activity within their communities. It was noted that funding had been made available from the Regional Partnership Board in one area to 'support young people identified as having need for support for emotional and Mental health intervention, but who fell between the universal agencies and targeted agencies and CAMHS' (maintained sector youth worker). The result of this scenario is that youth work is filling an emerging gap in provision.

4.29   All these approaches we have identified can be described as youth work as set out in Youth Work in Wales, Principles and Purposes

(CWVYS, 2022). Youth work in Wales is a broad church and this is to be celebrated, however, the lack of consistency of purpose and the variability in how youth work is used is often primarily based on organisational purpose. Another influence on the work is the nature of available funding.

4.30   It appears that in our sample groups, youth work has commonly become a response to social problems, for example concerns with youth justice in a community, identity formation, inclusion or concerns over housing or the mental health of young people, or as a response to some form of personal challenge or trauma. As a result, the specific and target driven nature of grant funding can in turn influence the predominant youth work pedagogy, to become an emergency pedagogy rather than being based on its stated purpose as a process of personal and social education as defined within the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work (CLD Scotland, 2019). One participant noted:

> 'We have previously commissioned a charity to provide a youth homelessness service for us on our behalf. My understanding is that's it's currently being reviewed. So it's not necessarily gonna continue [that way], but that is how it's been the last few years' (Maintained sector manager).

4.31   National and local voluntary sector organisations play a crucial role in the leadership and delivery of youth work across Wales, contributing to planning, delivery, and partnership working. It is important to note evidence from officials that the Welsh Government are increasingly making funding available on two-or three- year cycles. Despite this, one manager noted:

> 'We try and get a mix in terms of income and funding and we can't rely on, although we're exceptionally grateful for it, we can't rely on the Welsh Government funding because that's who knows. That's only ever indicative, It's only on a year by year basis. Umm, so we don't have the luxury or otherwise of planning more than that ahead' (Voluntary sector manager).

People are responding to considerable change

4.32   **Theme 2. People are responding to considerable change,— interviewees from the voluntary and maintained sector consistently acknowledged the challenges arising from fiscal austerity, from organisational restructuring, the current difficulties with increasing costs of living and the ongoing challenges from coronavirus (COVID-19). The results of these factors appear to be challenging for the people involved in the youth service.**

4.33   Data shows that Youth Support Grant funding was used to support many voluntary sector organisations, where established relationships were often in place between the maintained youth service and providers. Over reliance on grant funding can limit the ability of organisations to build up financial reserves which can add to feelings of uncertainty.

4.34   Interview data indicates that experienced people understand the importance of political brokerage, of the importance of being engaged in the latest policy and practice developments, but that this brings its own challenges the importance of people networks and of building effective working relationships. A supporting comment was:

> 'So if there's a mechanism that helps to shape the environment, both professionally or politically, we always try and get stuck in as much as we can' (Voluntary sector manager).

4.35   Evidence shows that qualified youth workers are able to discuss clearly the need for their work and demonstrate creative response to the needs they identify among young people. For example, one interviewee, discussing her practice said:

> 'when we had the proper youth club building, I could be more free, but I must admit now I have to be much more imaginative because we're only one small space. But I try and hit their needs. For instance, tonight we're doing life skills, I'm gonna make a cardboard washing machine and teach them about

washing loads and things like that. And money. We're gonna talk about money tonight. It's trying to make it fun. But you've only got one room' (Maintained sector youth worker).

Needs assessment

4.36   **Theme 3. Needs assessment**,—**interviews support the finding that needs assessment takes place at every level of the service,** at the Welsh Government level:

> 'we ask the local authorities, organisations, CWVYS and ETS to put forward a work plan and we would expect as part of that work plan that they've undertaken some assessment of where their priorities lie' (Welsh Government official).

4.37   As well as the digital specialisms, one organisation noted their support for young people is tailored to need:

> 'we do a lot of mental health support, especially post-pandemic, COVID, mental health anxiety and social inclusion. And we do a lot of work with home-schooled and home-educated young people. And those who are not going to get traditional GCSEs. So we go to schools, do a little bit of music GCSEs so DJ workshops' (voluntary sector youth worker).

4.38   Within our sample, there appears to be an understanding that at a community level, the assessment of need for youth work, for the holistic development of young people is lacking. This may be due to the increasing focus on targeted work noted elsewhere. Needs are identified from networks and referral agencies and not primarily by youth workers in communities, for example:

> 'Loads of different networks that we're on, which helps us build a picture, that all of our consultation work with the participants is around them. So, our feedback, our action plans, our equalities monitoring. It's all about the participants that come here' (maintained sector youth worker).

4.39   A number of observations were made about the continuing impacts of Covid lockdowns on young people, this suggests a longer-term

approach to the consistency of funding is necessary, not just in times of crisis, it was noted:

> 'Now those, those kids aren't fine now. Well, it's not like that sorted, you know', while it was noted among maintained sector colleagues that 'we've got a huge influx of young people since COVID', and they still continue to struggle you know, the year tens and elevens they're entering their last year but where's the recognition that they missed year 8 and 9 as well? They are struggling, they panic and they're anxious around that and we're here just to support them to get through that' (Voluntary sector youth worker).

Funding Internal

4.40 **Theme 4 Funding internal,—The concept of core funding is important within both the voluntary and maintained sectors**. From the voluntary sector, this is a representative quote:

> 'We complete surveys and they all come back saying core funding, please, because that's the most difficult thing to do. And that's the thing which drives us into the ground is trying to get core funding and then all the funding bodies say, oh well, that's very interesting'' (Voluntary sector manager).

4.41 This viewpoint arose time and again within the voluntary sector interviews, of organisations being asked what could be improved about their funding. The difficulty of achieving a sustainable position because of the lack of sources of core funding within the current funding system was consistently acknowledged as a significant challenge.

Wider Information

4.42 **Theme 5**. **Wider information,— training and the lack of available resources to support training was identified among the workforce.**

4.43 The need for a wider range of routes to train as a youth worker was highlighted as an issue, especially for young people who want to come into the profession. This example demonstrates the continual need for training opportunities at different levels within a changing workforce:

> 'So we got two who've got masters in youth work, we got three who've got level 3 (qualification) and then the rest are level 2 imminently. And we recruited sort of five new people in the last six months. So we kind of waiting to get them all together to them do the qualification at level 2' (maintained sector manager).

Funding External

4.44 **Theme 6. Funding External,—the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) is widely regarded as an important aspect of funding youth work in Wales**. The grant is known by different titles including the core local authority grant and the revenue support grant. This grant was the focus for one interview particularly, with a WLGA official. The following passage summarises one aspect of that interview:

> 'The official term for this (RSG) finance is 'Aggregated External Finances' which represents the support for local revenue spending from the Welsh Government and is made up of formula grant. Formula grant includes the revenue support grant (RSG), and the distributable part of non-domestic rates (NDR). The level of this funding is calculated as part of the process of standardised spending assessment with the purpose of establishing needs and availability of resources'.. This assessment takes into account 'Population figures, up-to-date pupil numbers and the types of things that you think might drive need in individual areas. Plus, adjustments for deprivation because need is always higher in deprived areas'. 'The formula also takes into account diseconomies of scale', for example comparatively higher costs arising from the delivery of

services in rural areas. The standardised Spending Assessment is carried out by the 'distribution subgroup, chaired by a Welsh Government official and on the committee are finance directors, a representative of the Welsh Local Government Association, civil servants and independent members' (extract from interview with WLGA official).

4.45 **Theme 7. There are numerous sources of external funding being used to fund youth work**. It was noted in two interviews in one local authority area that five community councils contributed substantially to the funding of youth work in their wards. Interview data further suggests that this model of funding ensures that the youth work carried out is based on local priorities and is outside the scope of the RSG and is regarded as predictable and consistent, in some cases having been in place for 20 years:

> 'it's been established for a long time that the forward-thinking community councils all fund youth work, so there's at least, at least half a dozen that still do'. (Voluntary sector manager).

4.46 Availability of grant funding from the Welsh Government, specifically for youth work has increased, and this is very much welcomed by youth work organisations, however, an indirect consequence of that is a widespread sense of precariousness among our sample and that maintained youth services are adjusting their strategies, illustrated by the comment

> 'I think a lot of the grants and the money that local authority used to put out, they've now got departments within (the) local authority that they putting the money to instead' (Voluntary sector manager).

4.47 Funding, how it is secured, how it is used and how its use is monitored has been an important topic throughout the fieldwork. This area was complex, and funding was perceived as being precarious. Voluntary sector organisations described a constant search for appropriate sources of funding, one interviewee noted that:

> 'If there was a funding strategy from local authorities and Welsh Government, yeah. When pots of funding were going to become available, what they were for, the deadlines in advance' (Voluntary sector youth worker)

4.48   While in local authorities there were often complex budget setting processes and commissioning arrangements in place. This complexity is demonstrated with the following quote:

> 'I think they (Welsh Government funding) did open up to three yearly (indicative allocation) recently, I don't think we could actually benefit from that due to the fact our funding streams coming from other places (do not align). So actually, you know, (to cover salary costs of) members of staff, it's really difficult, you know with the funding streams coming in like bit by bit yearly and yearly' (Maintained sector youth worker).

4.49   Our research, from analysis of the annual statistical return and from the survey shows fiscal austerity has had a substantial impact on the amount of funding available for the youth service in both the voluntary and maintained sector, one interviewee told us:

> 'in real terms.. the budget fell gradually' from 2010, 'then fell quite steeply, from 2014 to 2017' and 'gradually the funding kind of stabilized as we got into 2018/19, and in 2019/20 we start to, we start to see real terms growth' (WLGA official).

4.50   Analysis of data from interviews indicate there are differing perspectives within the sector as to whether the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) should be hypothecated, one manager within the voluntary sector noted:

> 'you've got the revenue support grant, which clearly needs .. to be hypothecated', although, 'I completely understand the local authority position whereby if that was made the law, then we'd have to cut something back' (voluntary sector manager).

4.51   Conversely, we also heard the view expressed that how the RSG is allocated:

'It's a matter of democratic accountability. At the end of the day that they [local authorities] should determine what resource goes to which services in their areas because they've got this broader view over how those services, those youth services, fit in with other services like education services and with social services as well' (WLGA official).

4.52 Interviewees in the voluntary sector were clear regarding the importance of building collaborations, with CWVYS but also with the maintained youth service locally, one interviewee noted that:

'So yeah, it is just through networks really. I wasn't aware until I joined CWVYS that there are opportunities shared in other ways and ways.. to go about it. But to be honest with you, they all kind of lead to a relationship being established with the principal youth officers of the youth service in some way shape or form.' (Voluntary sector youth worker).

4.53 The availability of long term sustainable and consistent funding is a challenge for organisations within the voluntary and maintained sectors, often funders require grant applications to demonstrate innovation, and this undermines already successful work. One interviewee noted:

'So challenges for us is long term funding OK and a multi-year funding in particular, OK. It's one of our main strategies and one of our goals to be a sustainable charity.' (Voluntary sector manager).

4.54 Longer term strategic planning between local authorities and the Welsh Government would be valued, in terms of making available grants to voluntary organisations, so that organisations have advance notice and can be prepared. One example of the desire for longer term funding confirmed: 'Families First funding has gone from 3 to 5 years "which is a massive plus" (Maintained sector youth worker).

4.55 However, most responses reflected some of the perceived disadvantages associated with grant funding, for example:

'Grant funding can be a little bit unnerving…it's annual funding. Short term funding is an issue in relation to job security, so this impacts on the number of applications for posts which are short-term' (Maintained sector youth worker).

Monitoring

4.56 **Theme 8. Monitoring,—there are arrangements in place within each of the four local authority areas studied here to apply for, to administer and monitor the impact of grant funding**. It was noted in one interview:

'We have a central commissioning hub, it considers all of social services. But we do put a lot of education money through there. So we have one Commissioning hub. So all of our external pots go into that and then we go in and work as sort of subject matter experts I suppose on grants to work out on how it's distributed' (Maintained sector manager).

4.57 Within our sample, one national voluntary organisation noted reporting on their Youth Support Grant funding to 22 local authorities separately. It was noted in an interview with a voluntary sector manager that:

'So I'm reporting to the Principal Youth Officer. The Principal Youth Officer is then reporting to Welsh Government, and they are reading my report 22 times over' (Voluntary sector manager).

4.58 Monitoring processes are varied and often complex, recipients are in a cycle of quarterly reporting. This is illustrated by this case:

'So yeah, it's a minefield and it would be really nice and it's never gonna happen if all the funders came together when they go, here's the reporting that we want to all the sector to work towards.' (Voluntary sector youth worker).

Strengths and Weaknesses

4.59 **Theme 9. Strengths and weaknesses, —the flexibility of the youth service and how it responds to the shifting needs of society and young people is seen as a strength**. This can also cause problems however, because these responses often reflect an adult led, medicalising perspective, for example a therapeutic approach to treating young people with trauma and adversity:

> 'You know, maybe some like behaviour issues of the young people might need some support on, obviously, you know, with the NEET thing as well, you know it's trying to take down the barriers for young people accessing the mainstream services really' (maintained sector youth worker).

4.60 While those intentions may be valuable, it is unclear whether the youth worker is best placed to carry out that important work, this training reflects equipping participants with valuable skills and knowledge in health and social care approaches when the primary purpose of the youth worker is an educational one. This flex was evidenced in one interview:

> 'we've done so much training on all sorts of stuff. Trauma informed schools, trauma recovery models. We do all sorts of training we do all the parenting training, so you know all of that stuff' (maintained sector youth worker).

4.61 Our interviews indicate that young people are often involved in the process of fundraising including making grant applications. It is also clear that young people appear to be involved less as the size of the grant application increases. It was said:

> 'Definitely in the smaller ones, so we do quite a few you know, like the youth support grant that come out from the council. They are like £500, £1,000, those kind of size and they require the involvement of young people to be able to put applications in' (Voluntary sector manager).

4.62 Within our sample there are examples where some voluntary sector youth work organisations generate income from sources other than grants. This is a strength and aids sustainability. One interviewee said:

> 'I think we're in a stronger position than some organisations because we do have an income stream as well [in addition to grant funding] and you know that's something that makes us a viable organisation' and 'that's not something we should be ashamed of' (Voluntary sector manager).

4.63 The youth service across the nation is successful in securing a wide range of grants available for youth work. As well as this being a strength, this results in considerable amounts of time spent on administration to successfully deliver the grants. A representative of one community based voluntary sector organisation told us in an interview:

> 'For this financial year, when we finish our financial year, we'll have 11 separate grants' (Voluntary sector manager).

4.64 This burden of precarious funding is not confined to local organisations, a national organisation representative noted that 'let's say we work with up to about 10 strands of project funding as it fluctuates, but we're all constantly submitting bids. Sometimes within consortia' (Voluntary sector manager).

4.65 National voluntary organisations report receiving recurring block grants from national bodies including Sports Council for Wales on a 4-yearly cycle which is regarded as predictable and dependable, unlike some other grant schemes which operate on shorter cycles cycle. In addition, the direct links to the organisations are viewed as effective ways of working.

4.66 The administrative workload involved with applying for and accounting for lots of small grants is a challenge and often diverts qualified and experienced practitioners from face-to-face work with young people.

5 Conclusions

5.1 These conclusions take into account data from the quantitative and qualitative work carried out during Phase 1. The aim of this feasibility exercise was to undertake an **initial scoping** of what data is available and how that data can inform the work going forward to successfully carry out the research across the rest of the nation. The feasibility study demonstrates that it has been possible to collect a range of evidence through adopting both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection. This strongly suggesting that there is sufficient evidence available to address the full scope of the proposed research going forward.

5.2 This section will include a summary of the evidence from research undertaken as part of this initial feasibility study—based on a range of diverse evidence: a rapid review of the published literature, including a range of documents made available to us during the fieldwork, the survey data and the interviews and focus groups undertaken with the voluntary and maintained youth service. The research has identified some key initial and complex themes which reflect the diversity of youth work from the sample of voluntary and maintained youth services identified. A caveat to consider is that this was a feasibility study and therefore many of the issues identified will be further explored in the next phases of the research.

5.3 The findings from our initial research across four local authority areas in Wales in the voluntary and the maintained sectors show that the youth service is a diverse service responding to the needs of many different stakeholders. Stakeholders as varied as the Welsh Government, local government, local communities, local and national organisations such as schools, the Police service and health services. These varying perspectives indicate that the pedagogy of youth work is subject to different influences as it tries to adapt and respond to changing demands. Organisations experience these pressures in many ways, for example from the short-term nature of grants and how this annual

cycle influences staff which in turn impacts the consistency and sustainability of the service for young people. This is further exacerbated by the annual reduction in front line staff numbers across the four local Authorities reviewed in this survey.

5.4   There are differing perspectives within the sector as to whether or not youth work funding should be part of the RSG or removed and hypothecated. There are strong views on both sides of this debate concerned mainly with where and when decisions are made about the local funding of youth work and whether, or not, the youth service receives its suggested allocation.

5.5   The youth service is experiencing changing demands for youth work, and as a result organisations often respond unilaterally based on local circumstances. youth workers spoke eloquently about the value of their work for young people and how it responds to young people's needs arising from, for example, health and well-being, and from concerns about anti-social behaviour.

5.6   Our research shows that there is a considerable range of types of youth work taking place and in different contexts, for example, we identified youth work taking place in community halls, in schools, in adventure playgrounds, in hospitals, in metal containers, on the streets and in purpose-built youth centres. The variety of these settings alone demonstrate the versatility and flexibility of youth work. There is also a broad variety of sources of funding for the work, from charitable funding, funding through community councils, grant funding from central and local government and other income streams including membership fees, rental income and licence fees. Youth work in Wales is fortunate that it has in place clear National Occupational Standards and policy documents which set out the boundaries and limitations of the work.

5.7   This policy context is useful to reiterate the key purpose of youth work; the personal and social education of young people. What is emerging from our research is the development of more one-to-one work, often in response to the increasing numbers of young people experiencing

anxiety and behavioural or emotional difficulties and away from the community-based methods of youth work. These changing trends among young people, combined with the changing climate of funding mean that in our sample, the role of the Principal Youth Officer often involved a wider role than that of leadership of the maintained youth service alone.

5.8 We found that national and local voluntary sector organisations play a crucial role in the leadership and delivery of youth work across Wales, contributing to the identification of local need, for example for physical activity, for inclusion, for social education and playing a leading part in creating opportunities for youth work in Welsh. However, substantial aspects of this work are regarded as vulnerable due to how it is currently funded, through short term grants. Our results show that a minority of the survey respondents find the current youth work funding model as being quite unstable and unpredictable. With a number of sample participants noting they frequently have to change their service model to meet the requirements of funders.

5.9 It is apparent that the youth service, like many other public services has experienced challenges arising from fiscal austerity. Between 2010 and 2021 the total maintained sector annual income and expenditure dropped by 2.66 per cent and 3.54 per cent respectively. Therefore, a £1 reduction in income equates to a £1.33 reduction in expenses. As income reduces this shows organisations reduce their expenditure even more. By continued reductions in income funding in the youth sector, expenses are being cut more substantially, this is likely to' subsequently impact the reach of youth work organisations. In addition, organisational restructuring, the difficulties arising from increasing costs of living and the ongoing challenges from coronavirus have created a challenging environment for people involved in the youth service.

5.10 The establishment of good working relationships was an important theme arising from our interviews, the notion of trusting relationships and networks was felt to be important when identifying and drawing down grants. An appreciation of the professional and political context of

the work was present where projects were mature. Interviewees in the voluntary sector were clear of the importance of building collaborations, across the sector locally and nationally.

5.11 One very powerful aspect of the research was to hear the stories of youth workers, our evidence shows that youth workers were able to clearly articulate the need for their work and demonstrate creative response to the needs they identify among young people.

5.12 When we looked into how the sector assessed social need, we identified that needs assessment takes place at every level of the service, this takes place informally in some situations through reflective practice among youth workers. In other settings organisations assess need as part of their role feeding information into Regional Partnership Boards, in some settings youth workers are involved in carrying out formal needs assessments with young people as part of common assessment framework planning. Some organisations demonstrated their use of mapping closely with schools, looking at the diversity of populations in specific areas and other organisations-based needs assessment on targets set out in Welsh policy, for example supporting in the creation of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Based on our survey's findings, we found 88 per cent of organisations within this limited sample work bilingually with young people, with 100 per cent of participants offering their youth service provision in Welsh. This observation will be explored nationally in Phase 2. However, participation in robust youth work needs analysis was often ad hoc rather than systematic and might be enhanced with youth work focussed networks and more systematic gap analysis, information sharing and inclusive planning.

5.13 It appeared that the generic, community based, universal approach to youth work has been diminished, partly due to the need to remodel services because of austerity. As a result of this, many youth workers involved in universal work within the maintained sector are employed on part-time contracts, often in term time only with limited time for development work in their contracts. It appears that at a community

level, the assessment of need for youth work, for the holistic development of young people should be strengthened. This has resource implications, but this is worthy of further exploration. As the focus of practice becomes increasingly targeted, we recommend there is a need to further evidence the potential costs and benefits of different forms of youth work related to the clearly stated Principles and Purposes of Youth Work in Wales.

5.14 It was appreciated that funding for youth work is increasing from prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Despite these welcome increases, the often-short term nature of the funding impacts on staff and young people, this suggests a longer-term approach to the consistency and reliability of funding is necessary. The results highlight that 42.7 per cent of the survey's participants found the stability of funding a concern.

5.15 The concept of core funding is important within both the voluntary and maintained sectors, perhaps for different reasons. Within the voluntary sector it was apparent that most organisations were surviving and not thriving. Core funding has reduced on average by 8.77 per cent between 2010 and 2021. While there was a recognition that funding is available, in some cases it was paid in arrears. For example, 54 per cent of the Strategic Voluntary Youth Work Organisation Grant funding for 2022-23 and 2023-24 are paid in arrears. It is important to note that applicants to this fund can choose to have the grant paid in advance or in arrears. It was also evident that there was no standard for applying for employment costs within grants, for example when grant applications are being prepared. Some organisations acknowledged not charging a fee, some noted five per cent of total grant, some 10 per cent and others more. This will be explored further in Phase 2.

5.16 It was widely acknowledged that training is taking place but that often training was responding to the secondary purposes of youth work as highlighted above (working with trauma-informed approaches was an example). Between 2010 and 2021, training and development expenses for staff members has reduced on a real compound annual growth rate of -9.73 per cent. However, the funding for training over the

sample period varies. Between 2010 to 2018 the annual reduction was -17.4 per cent, and between 2019 to 2021 the average increase in training expenses was 8.1 per cent showing an uptake in investment over the last few years. However, funding for training was limited, this is an illustration of how restrictive many budgets are. We have found evidence that funding may be allocated to training in response to the secondary purpose of the work and this will be investigated further. One organisation noted that they would appreciate a wider range of routes to train as a youth worker, especially for young people who want to come into the profession.

5.17   During our interviews it was evident that there are clear governance procedures in place, these were present in the voluntary and maintained sectors and helped organisations make informed choices about their fundraising strategies, about monitoring the work and about reporting to stakeholders and funders.

5.18   It was felt that in some larger voluntary organisations there was repetition and inefficiencies in fundraising and reporting, for example, some national voluntary organisations having to report on their Youth Support Grant funding to 22 local authorities separately. There may be more efficient approaches available.

5.19   There was an acknowledgement at all levels of the service that involving young people in decision making was a good thing. For example, young people were often involved in the process of fundraising including making grant applications. It is also clear that young people appear to be less actively engaged with decision making as the size of the grant application increases. There were examples of strategies being developed within large voluntary organisations to continue to develop their capacity to actively involve young people in wider aspects of decision making within the organisation.

5.20   While most of the funding available comes from grants, some voluntary sector youth work organisations generate substantial amounts of income from sources other than grants. This is a strength and aids sustainability and mitigates any risk and diversifies income streams

from an over reliance on narrow sources of grant funding. While the youth service across the nation is successful in securing a wide range of grants available for youth work, as well as this being a strength, it also results in considerable amounts of time spent on administration to successfully deliver, monitor and report on the grants. Monitoring systems vary a great deal, funders wanting reports on their own priorities, this makes monitoring often complex although it is hoped new management information systems will make this process more efficient.

5.21 Some voluntary organisations report receiving recurring block grants from national funding bodies including Sport Wales on a four yearly cycle which is regarded as being predictable and dependable, wider adoption of a similar funding strategy may prove beneficial.

5.22 The youth service demonstrates flexibility in how it responds to the shifting needs of society and young people, and this is seen as a strength. Evidence of this has been identified from our interviews and the quantitative survey data.

5.23 While we identified that the administrative workload associated with applying for and accounting for large numbers of small grants diverts qualified and experienced practitioners from face-to-face work with young people, having a variety of funding sources spreads the risk of an individual grant not being renewed. This demonstrates where on one level a finding can be both a strength and a weakness.

5.24 The qualitative and quantitative findings from this initial feasibility study demonstrate that it is possible to collect data to begin to address the aims and objectives of the study, specifically:

- To undertake a funding review/cost benefit analysis of youth work funding across Wales. The review to include evidence from both the maintained and voluntary sectors.
- To consider how the funding impacts youth work provision across Wales and how any variations effect accessibility and rights.

5.25 In addition to addressing the proposed aims/objectives of the study, the qualitative and quantitative data collected has enabled a greater

understanding of where funding comes from, how this is accessed and what the money is spent on. The feasibility study illustrates what data is available and how it will enable research team to address the first aim of the research; in addition, barriers and challenges to accessing funding in both the voluntary and maintained sector have been identified.

5.26 The strength of the approach has been the adoption of qualitative and quantitative techniques to establish how the funding for youth work is utilised across the voluntary and maintained sectors and how this varies across areas. This research has begun to highlight evidence of the economic effectiveness of youth work to help guide the subsequent phases of the project, recognising the need to tailor the approach to the circumstances of youth work in Wales as highlighted in the REA.

6 Recommendations

6.1   Three recommendations are proposed, reflecting the aim of the feasibility study. These recommendations will influence subsequent phases of the research and it is anticipated that further recommendations will be forthcoming.

6.2   **Recommendation 1:** The research team believe it is evident from the research undertaken, that there is sufficient data available to address the requirements of subsequent phases of the research. **Therefore, we recommend that the Welsh Government agree to continue with phases 2 and 3 of the research.**

6.3   **Recommendation 2:** To continue with data collection as outlined in the agreed phases of the research with voluntary sector organisations and local authorities across the nation, to be able to further corroborate and triangulate the indicative evidence gathered in this feasibility study. This will include further work on findings from phase 1 and any new findings which may emerge from across Wales.

6.4   **Recommendation 3**: For the research team to work with Welsh Government officials and the research steering group to further identify appropriate data collection approaches and sampling strategy for subsequent phases of the research.

6.5   We would like to recognise the support and encouragement of the organisations and individuals taking part in this research and extend a note of thanks. We have engaged with the sector at a busy time yet gathered important and relevant data from interviews and focus groups, through our survey, and data from the literature, we are confident we have a rich range of evidence to inform our recommendations outlined above.

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Annex A Stakeholders

Local Authority Area	Voluntary Sector Organisation	Maintained Youth Service Provision
Powys	Interviewed national organisations due to challenges of smaller VSO organisation being able to engage in research.	- Powys LA universal team - Powys LA management and finance - Powys LA senior managers - Powys inclusion team
Wrexham	- Wrexham VSO interview: The Venture - Wrexham VSO Youth and Play Partnership - Wrexham EYST	- Wrexham LA Youth Service management - Wrexham LA youth workers
Swansea	- Swansea MAD interview - Swansea YMCA - Swansea Mixtup - Swansea EYST	- Swansea LA Hub (operational) - Swansea LA Hub manager - Swansea LA Early Help Hub Manager - Swansea LA Finance officers - Swansea LA Leadership team
Newport	- Newport Live - Newport Mind - Newport Maindee House - Newport EYST	- Newport LA (Leadership team) - Newport LA (Operational team)
Totals	11	13

Additional Interviews N=7
Welsh Government Civil Servants
WLGA representatives
National VSO Interview CWVYS
National Urdd Gobaith Cymru
Duke of Edinburgh's Award
Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales
EYST

Annex B Survey Questions

The following questions were provided in the survey in both Welsh and English to the participants. The survey had four sections, questions about the organisation, questions about the organisations funding, question about the organisations team, and questions about the young people the organisation works with. Participants were given a three-week window to complete the survey and offered opportunities to meet with a member of the research team to clarify issues or questions they had about the survey.

Question type 1 - Questions about the organisation.

Q1	What is the name of your organisation?
Q2	In what year was your organisation started?
Q3	Does your organisation operate (please select all that apply) - Locally - Regionally - Nationally
Q4	What youth services do you provide? (Please select all that apply) - Mobile youth service - Detached or out reach your service - School and/or College based - Youth centre - Information Shop - Youth Club 1. Other (please specify)
Q5	What is the aim/or purpose of your youth work provision?

Q6	Does your organisation offer any specialised provision with different aims and objectives e.g. young carers project. Please list them here

Q7	What areas does your organisation aim to cover with the young people? - Family and relationships - Environment - Education - Employment and/or training - Health and wellbeing - Housing - Justice and equality - Money and finances - Sport/leisure - Other (please specify)
Q8	Do you provide your service in? - English only - Welsh only 1. Welsh and English

Question type 2 – Funding questions

Q9	Please select the total funding your organisation receives for youth work each year? Participants select from 2011-2021 the total funding they have received. Financial ranges include - Budget up to £5,000 - Budget from £5,001-10,000 - Budget from £10,001-25,000 - Budget from £25,001-100,000 • More than £100,000
Q10-21	In 2011 where did your funding come from, and how much funding came from each source (please list your sources of funding e.g., local authority, lottery etc). This question is repeated for each year (i.e. 2012, 2013, …, to 2021).
Q22	Approximately how many hours a month do you spend on funding grants/bids?
Q23	Does your organisation receive any local authority funding? - Yes • No
Q24	Which Directorates in the LA provide grants - Education - Children's Services - Regeneration - Leisure

	- Community Safety • other (please specify)
Q25	How stable is your funding from year to year? - Very Predictable/Stable - Quite Predictable/Stable - Constant - Quite unpredictable/Unstable A) Very unpredictable/ unstable
Q26	Please explain your choice of answer to the prior question.
Q27	What could be changed to improve the stability / predictability of funding sources for your organisation?
Q28	Are their seasonality effects in your budgets? I.e. Do you budget more in the winter compared to the summer? Please explain your answer.
Q29	What sources provide you information about potential funding sources. These include websites, people, other organisations etc. Please list all the sources.
Q30	What barriers, relating to funding impact on your work?

Question type 3 – Team questions

Q31	How many individual staff are on your payroll?
Q32	How many of these people are JNC qualified?
Q33	How many of these individuals have a youth work qualifications other than JNC?
Q34	How many full-time equivalents (FTEs) are on your pay roll?
Q35	How many volunteers regularly (at least twice a month) contribute to your organisation?
Q36	How many of these individuals are JNC qualified?
Q37	How many of these individuals have a youth work qualifications other than JNC?
Q38	How many FTEs are in management/strategy roles, and how many are in face/frontlines roles. Please ensure in your division, the total number of FTE sum to be the same as the number inputted in Q34.
Q39	How many individuals in your organisation work on funding grants/bids

Question type 4 – Young people and other questions

Q40	Annually, over the last 10 years how many young people has your organisation worked with? Participants select options in the following buckets - Less than 20 - 21-40 - 41-60 - 61-80 - 81-100 • More than 101 (please specify)
Q41	How are young people involved in decision making?
Q42	Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your organisation

Annex C - Qualitative Interview / Focus Group Questions

Youth Work in Wales Funding Review Research: Voluntary Sector Interview / Focus Group

Research project title:

Youth Work in Wales Funding Review Research

Research investigator:

Research Participants name:

Introductions

We are carrying out research on behalf of Welsh Government The research team consists of senior academics from Trinity St David (UWTSD), Wrexham Glyndŵr (WGU) and Cardiff Met (CM).

Background

A review of youth work funding in Wales is in response to the Youth Work Interim Board recommendations for the need for a funding review to better understand how funding across youth work in Wales from both the **voluntary and maintained** sectors is accessed and spent and the impact of this funding.

The interview will take around an hour. We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time up until we begin analysing your data.

Consent

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken from UK institutions require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign the consent form.

Please ask participants to read the attached information sheet and complete the consent form attached.

Questions

Theme 1: Organisational Context
Question 1: What are the local regional & national aims & objectives of your organisation/provision?
Prompts:

Theme 2: People
Question 1: How many FTEs are directly employed by your organisation to provide youth work and youth support work? How many individuals? How many volunteers?
Prompts: How many staff are strategic/ managerial and how many front line / face to face? How many staff and volunteers deliver targeted youth work? How many open access / universal provision?
Question 2: What are the qualifications of volunteers involved in youth work?
Prompts When do people work in the main, during the daytime/ evening/ weekends?
Question 3: How many FTE staff delivering targeted youth work how many open access / universal?

Prompts: What are the qualification levels of each individual directly employed by local authority to deliver youth work? Are there any volunteers and if so, their qualifications?

Theme 3 : Needs assessment

Question 1 How are local/ regional/ national needs for provision mapped and identified?

Prompts: How are young people involved in identifying need for provision?

Does anything change when needs or gaps are identified?

Question 2: Who is responsible for mapping needs and mapping provision in the area?

Prompts: Any voluntary sector planning structures locally, any collaborative projects?

Question 3: Does your organisation contribute to any local authority needs assessment or provision mapping? How?

Prompts: What mechanisms exist for VSOs to contribute to mapping and needs assessment processes locally, regionally, nationally? what types of work are you involved in?

Question 4: Is your organisation involved in any OTHER local regional or national needs assessment and/ or youth provision mapping processes? In what way?

Theme 4: Funding Internal
Question 1: Do you know if the local authority or Welsh Government fund or commission any external organisations to deliver youth work provision within the area?
Prompts:
Question 2: Does the local authority sector commission or fund any youth work provision from your organisation?
Prompts: If so what for and how much? What is the application/tender process?
Question 3: Please describe the benefits and strengths of current funding systems and processes?
Prompts: Do you think there is Value For Money? Why/why not? Evidence?

Theme 5. Wider Information
Question 1. Are young people involved in the funding decision-making process? How?
Prompts: What sources and how much?
Question 2.

Theme 6: Funding External
Question 1: What other funding does your organisation access and from which sources eg charitable funds, ESF / replacement? How do you access information about potential available funding at a local, regional, and national level?
Prompts: As an organisation how are decisions about which funding pots/contracts to apply for decided upon? Who makes these decisions?
Question 2: Prompts: Please describe any barriers or challenges presented by current funding processes?
Question 3: How might funding of youth provision be improved locally, regionally, nationally?
Prompts: How are young people involved in this process?
F11
Question 1. What are the objectives and KPIs for the various pots of youth work funding you access? For each source of funding what are the monitoring and reporting requirements?

Prompts:
Question 2. Who are providers accountable to? How well does governance work within your organisation?
Prompts:
Question 3. Do you think there is Value for Money within the funding arrangements in your area of work? (Why/why not? Evidence?)
Prompts:

Theme 8: Strengths and Weaknesses
Question 1. What are the benefits of the current funding system?
Prompts: Available evidence?
Question 2: What are the barriers or problems/issues experienced with the current funding system?
Prompts: Available evidence? Evidence of any change over time?
Question 3: How might funding of youth provision be improved locally, regionally, nationally?
Prompts:
Question 4: Is there anything you would like to add about funding, service delivery or the results of your work which hasn't been covered at this point?

Thank Participants for their time and if have any questions.

Youth Work in Wales Funding Review Research: Maintained sector Interview / Focus Group

Research project title:

Youth Work in Wales Funding Review Research

Research investigator:

Research Participants name:

Introductions

We are carrying out research on behalf of Welsh Government The research team consists of senior academics from Trinity St David (UWTSD), Wrexham Glyndŵr (WGU) and Cardiff Met (CM).

Background

A review of youth work funding in Wales is in response to the Interim Youth Work Board recommendations for the need for a funding review to better understand how funding across youth work in Wales from both the **voluntary and maintained** sectors is accessed and spent and the impact of this funding.

The interview will take around an hour. We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time up until we begin analysing your data.

Consent

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken from UK institutions require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign the consent form.

Please ask participants to read the attached information sheet and complete the consent form attached.

Questions

Theme 1: Organisational Context
Question 1: Which directorate does the youth service sit within, what is the role of the PYO?
Prompts: Does the PYO have responsibility for other areas of work?
Question 2: What are the Aims and Objectives of your work?
Prompts: what types of work are you involved in?

Theme 2: People
Question 1: How many paid staff are strategic/ managerial and how many are front line/ face to face?
Prompts: In addition, is the work supported by volunteers?
Question 2: How many FTEs are directly employed by local authority to provide youth work? How many individuals? How many volunteers?
Prompts When do people work in the main, during the daytime/ evening/ weekends?
Question 3: How many FTE staff delivering targeted youth work how many open access / universal?

Prompts: What are the qualification levels of each individual directly employed by local authority to deliver youth work? Are there any volunteers and if so, their qualifications?

Theme 3: Needs assessment

Question 1 How are local needs and provision identified, and

who is responsible for mapping needs and mapping provision in the local authority area?

Prompts: How are young people involved in identifying need for provision?

Does anything change when needs or gaps are identified?

Question 2: What mechanisms exist for the voluntary sector to contribute to the needs assessment process?

Prompts: Any voluntary sector planning structures locally, any collaborative projects?

Theme 4: Funding Internal

Question 1: What is the nominal RSG allocation for youth work provision in the LA? Are you involved in any discussions about how the funding is allocated?

Prompts:

Question 2: What percentage of the nominal RSG allocation is actually devolved/allocated to youth work provision and youth service

Prompts:

Question 3. How is the youth service budget allocated within the LA, what are the decision-making processes and who is involved in signing off budget allocations?

Theme 5. Wider Information
Question 1. What other funding is accessed by the LA to deliver youth work in the local authority area?
Prompts: What sources and how much?
Question 2. Do you feel it is necessary to access additional funding and if so, how do you access information about other potential funding at a local, regional, and national level?

Theme 6: Funding External
Question 1. Does the local authority fund or commission any external organisations to deliver youth work within the local authority area?
Prompts: Which external organisations are funded by the local authority?
Question 2: What is the total financial support from local authority to each commissioned youth work organisation/ service/provision?
Prompts:

Question 3: What are the aims and objectives of these organisations / projects/provisions?
Prompts: How are young people involved in this process?

Theme 7: Monitoring
Question 1. Who is responsible for contract management? (Are there any project annual or evaluation reports available detailing impact?)
Prompts:
Question 2. Who are providers accountable to? How well does governance work within your organisation?
Prompts:
Question 3. How are outcomes monitored reported and managed for 'commissioned work' and work the LA directly delivers?
Prompts:
Question 4. Do you think there is Value for Money within the funding arrangements in your area of work? (Why/why not? Evidence?)

Theme 8: Strengths and Weaknesses
Question 1. What are the benefits of the current funding system?
Prompts: Available evidence?

Question 2: What are the barriers or problems/issues experienced with the current funding system?
Prompts: Available evidence?
Question 3: How might funding of youth provision be improved locally, regionally, nationally?
Prompts:
Question 4: Is there anything you would like to add about funding, service delivery or the results of your work which hasn't been covered at this point?

Thank Participants for their time and if have any questions.

Annex D - Qualitative Analysis Coding book

Code book for analysis:

A coding book was developed, informed by the Welsh Government specification document (agreed and edited with youth engagement team and steering group consultation), and areas for focus taken from variables understood from the Annual Youth Work Audit Data, YSG funding, and Youth Work Organisation Grants; the following key a-prior themes have been identified as a framework for analysis:

Maintained Sector Analysis Themes

Colours to be used in coding data in text

	Key Theme a-priori
1.	<mark style="background:yellow">**Organisational Context**</mark> **Insert subthemes that are identified**
2.	<mark style="background:#33ff33">**People**</mark> **Insert subthemes that are identified**
3.	<mark style="background:#33ffff">**Needs Assessment**</mark> **Insert subthemes that are identified**
4.	<mark style="background:#ff33ff">**Funding Internal**</mark> **Insert subthemes that are identified**
5.	<mark style="background:#3333ff">**Wider Information**</mark> **Insert subthemes that are identified**
6.	<mark style="background:red">**Funding External**</mark> **Insert subthemes that are identified**
7.	<mark style="background:teal">**Monitoring**</mark> **Insert subthemes that are identified**
8.	<mark style="background:purple">**Strengths and weakness**</mark> **Insert subthemes that are identified**

Voluntary Sector Themes

Colours to be used in coding data in text

	Key Theme a-prior
1.	**Organisational Context** **Insert subthemes that are identified**
2.	**People** **Insert subthemes that are identified**
3.	**Needs Assessment** **Insert subthemes that are identified**
4.	**Funding Internal** **Insert subthemes that are identified**
5.	**Wider Information** **Insert subthemes that are identified**
6.	**Funding External** **Insert subthemes that are identified**
7.	**Monitoring** **Insert subthemes that are identified**
8.	**Strengths and weakness** **Insert subthemes that are identified**

Annex E. Quantitative Review

Source for all figures: all values calculated are from the annual statistical release and calculations completed by the authors. Figures are based on financial years. For example, 2021 data point is for the 2021-22 financial year. All numbers quoted are real, and CPI adjusted to 2015.

Annex E.1. Income Funding

E.1.1

Local Authority Income Core (£)

E.1.2

Total Local Authority Departmental Income (£)

E.1.3

Total National Sources (£)

E.1.4

Any Other Sources (£)

E.1.5
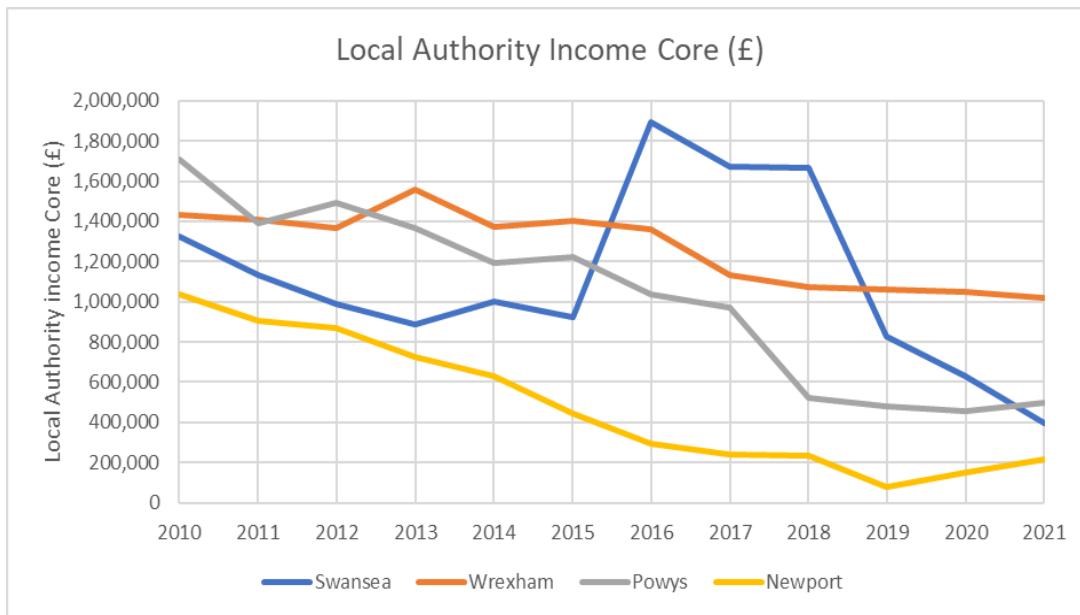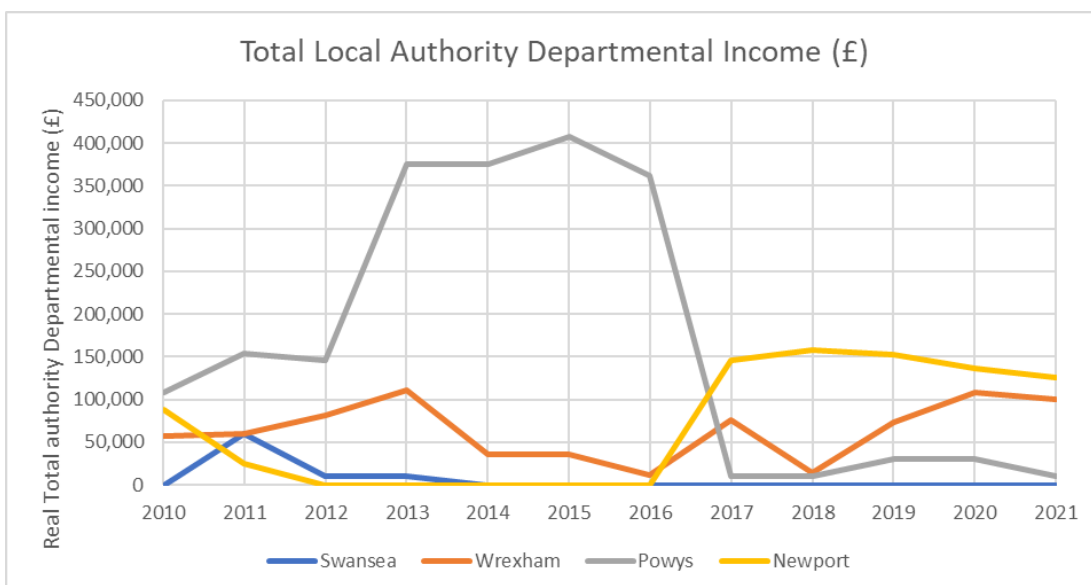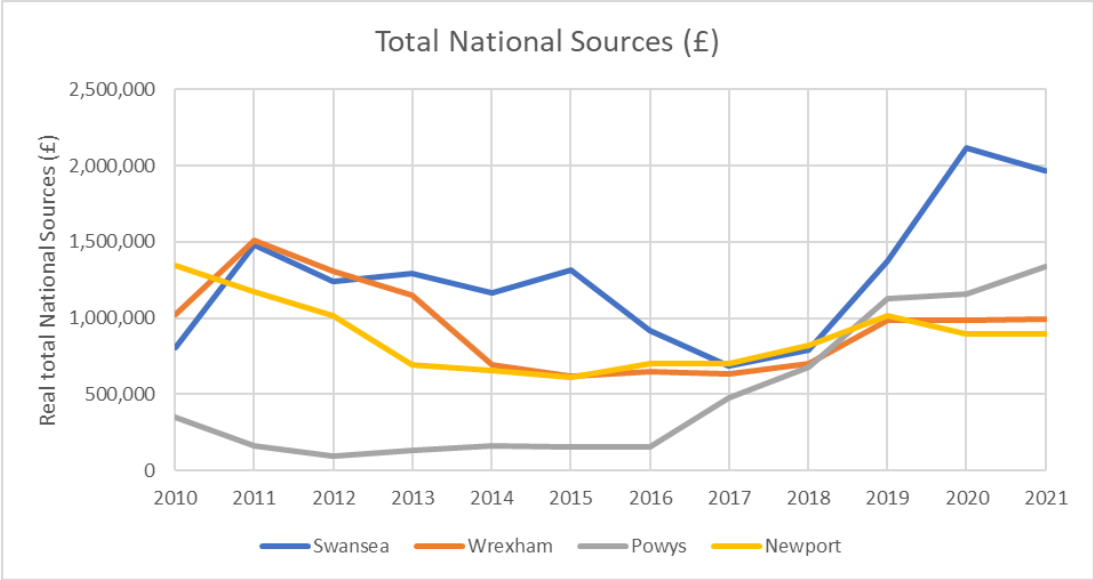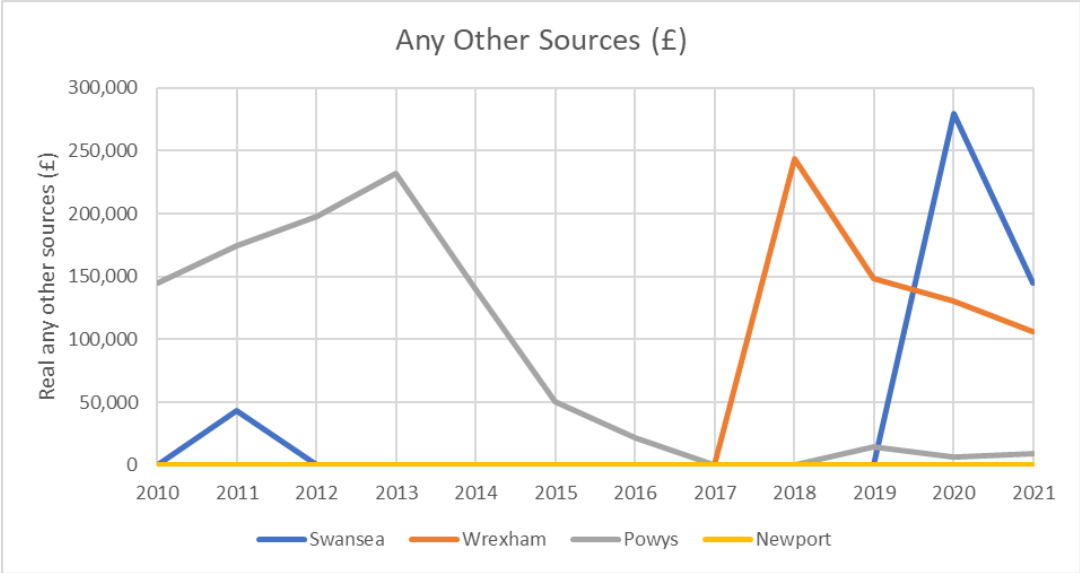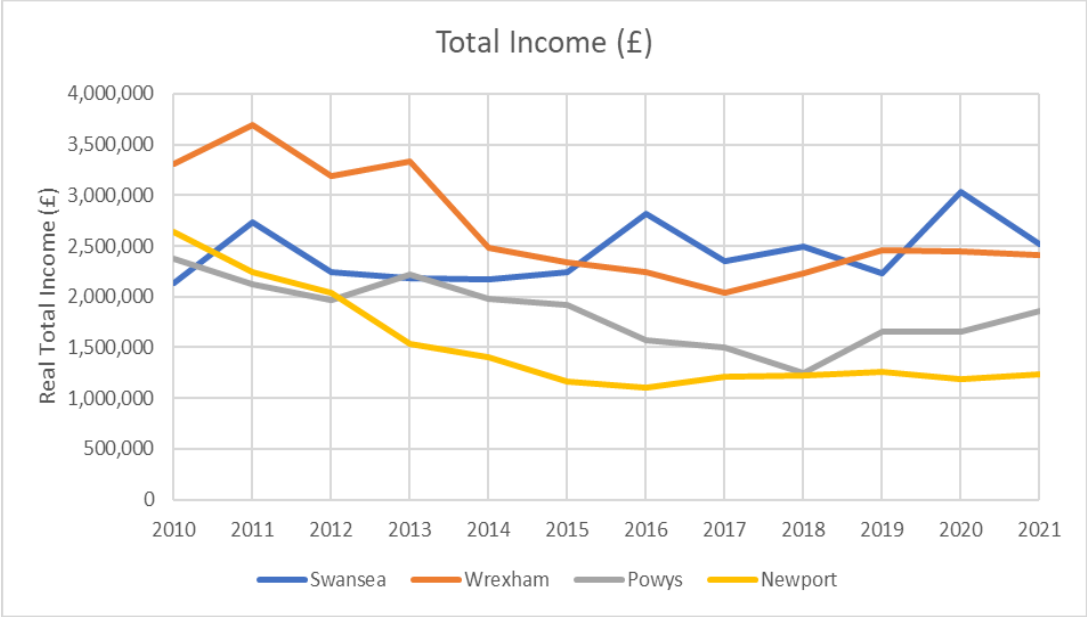
Total Income (£)

Annex E.2. Income per person

E.2.1
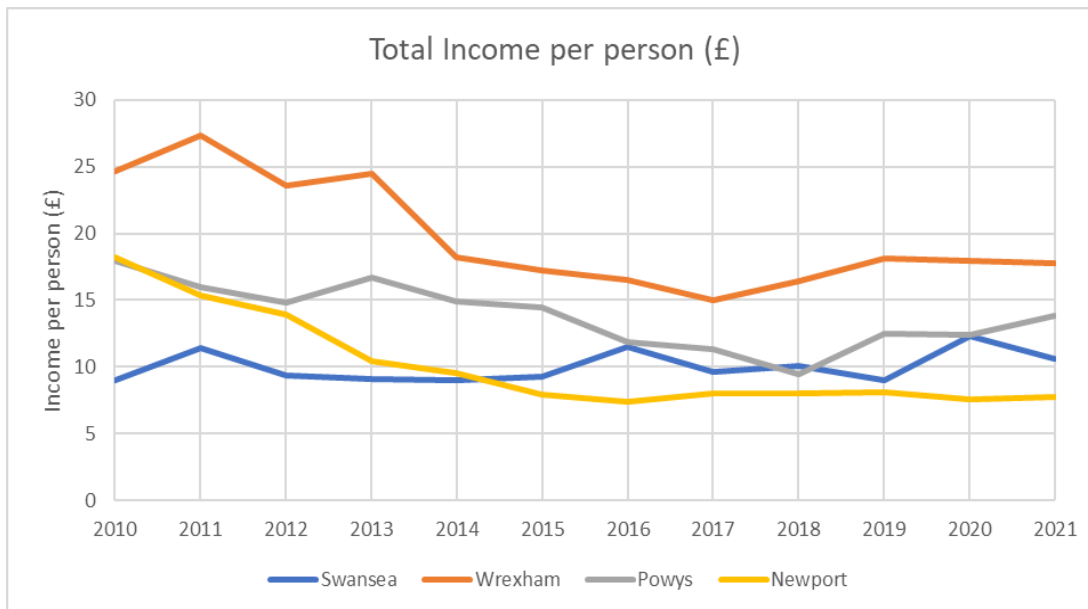
Total Income per person (£)

E.2.2

Core Income per person (£)
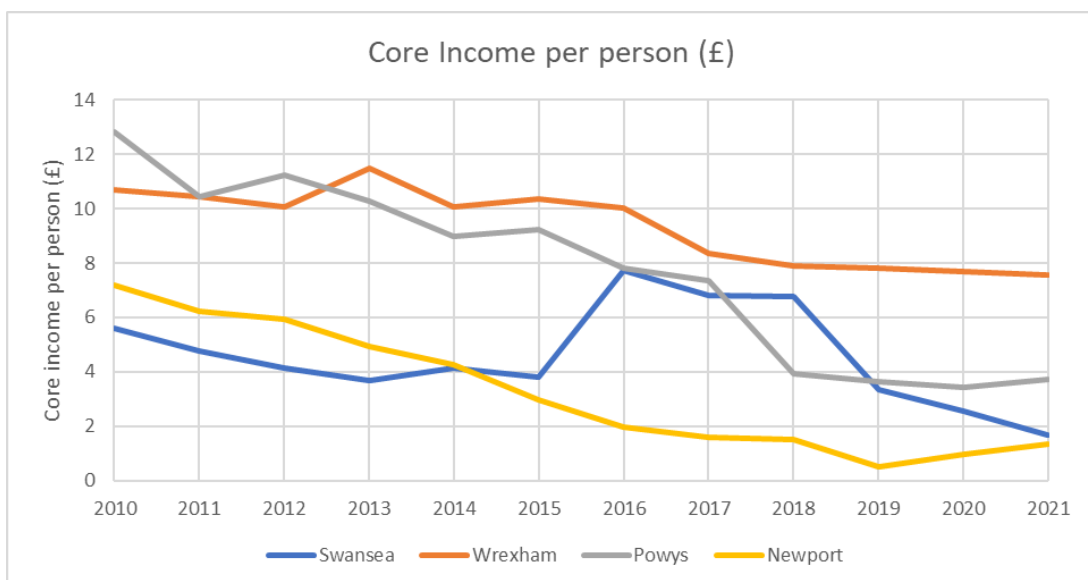
Source: All values calculated by the authors from the annual statistical release data and based on the total population within the local authority based on the Census data.

Annex E.3. Expenditure Data

Source for all figures: all values calculated are from the annual statistical release and calculations completed by the authors. The year numbers provided are for financial years. For example, 2021 data point is for the 2021-22 financial year. All numbers quoted are real, and CPI adjusted to 2015.

E.3.1 Combined management and front line staff expenditure

E.3.2

E.3.3

Training and Staff Development Expenses (£)

E.3.4

Building Expenditure (£)

E.3.5

E.3.6

E.3.7

Total Expenditure (£)
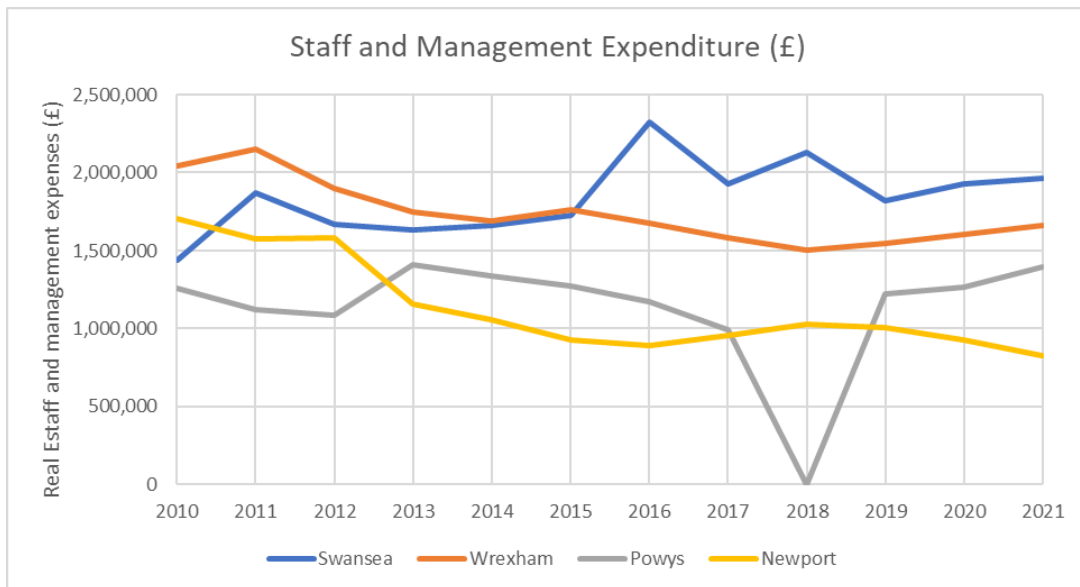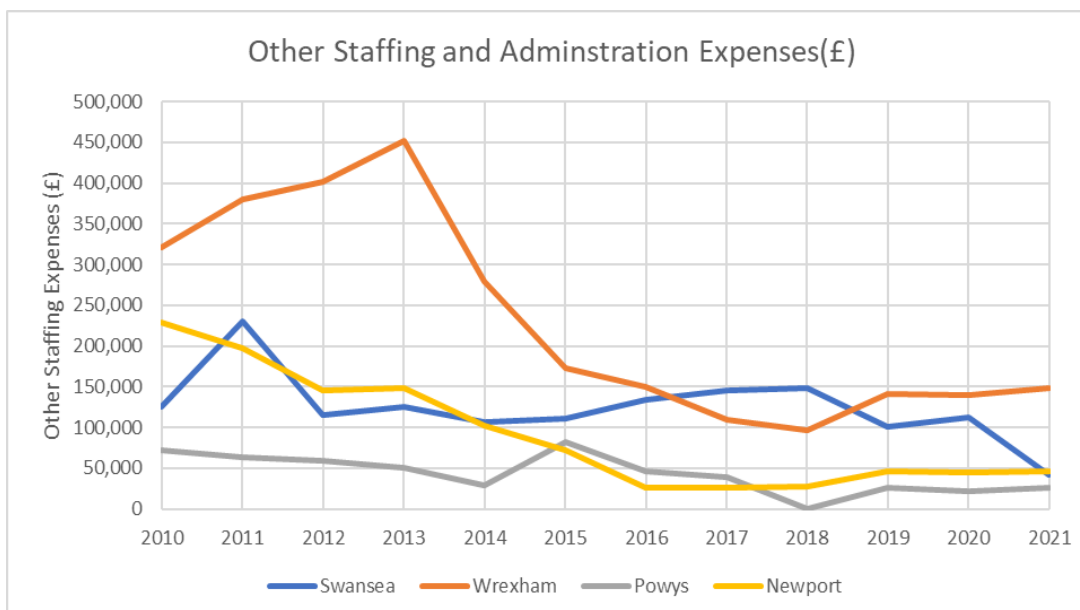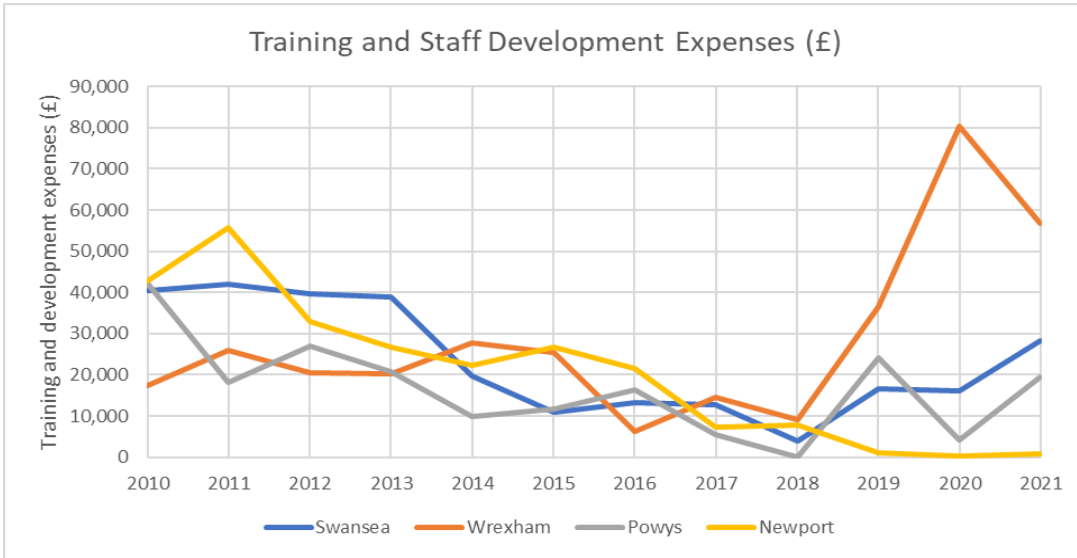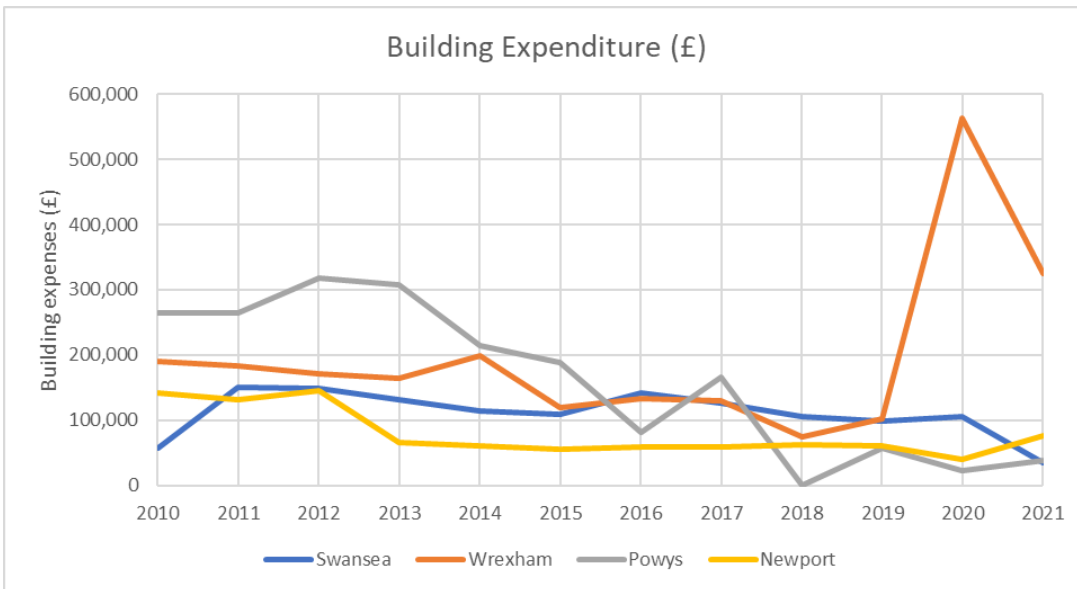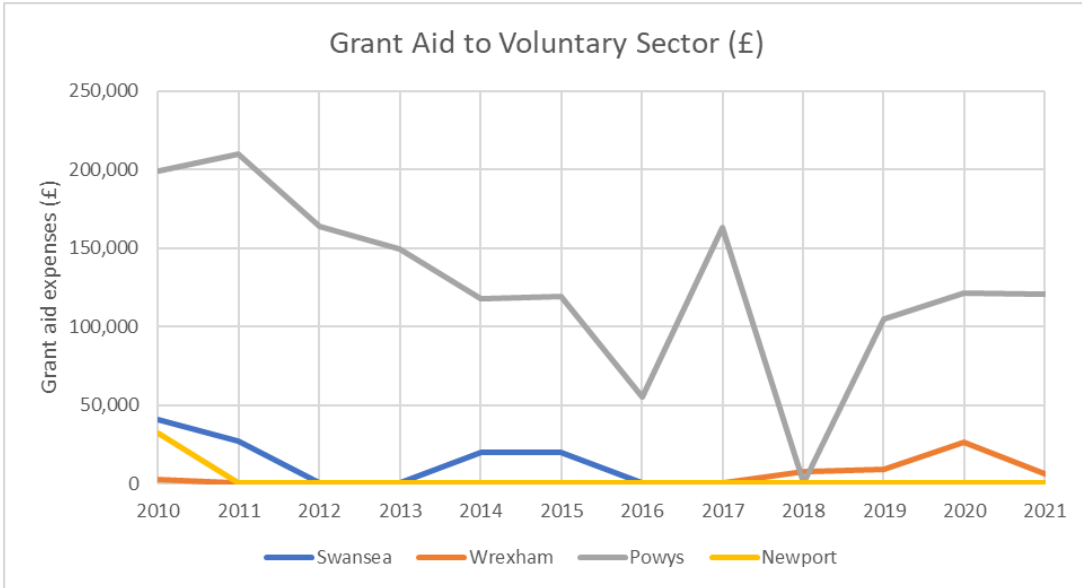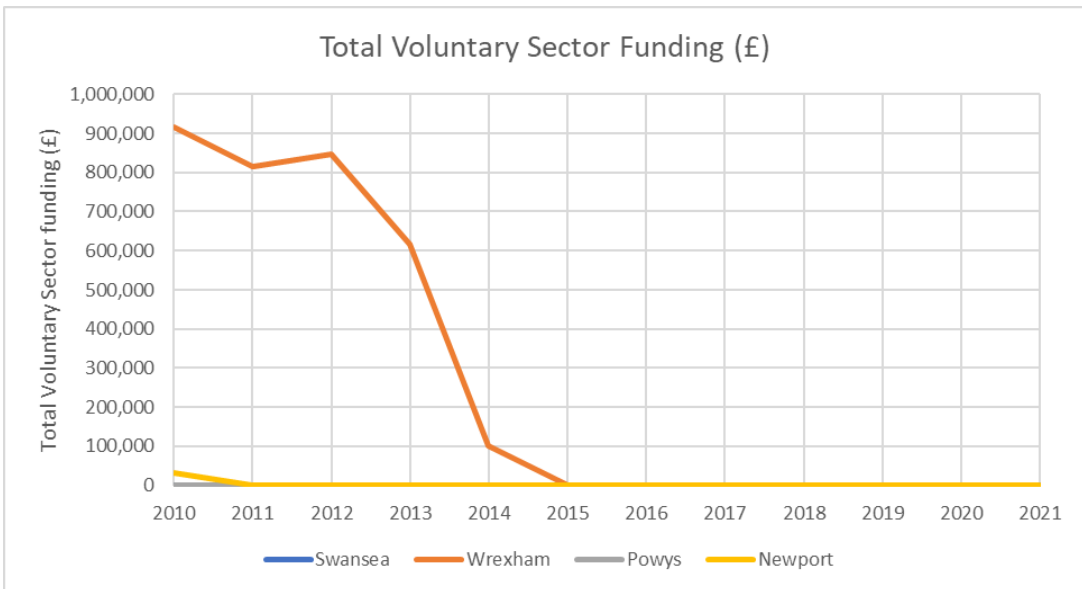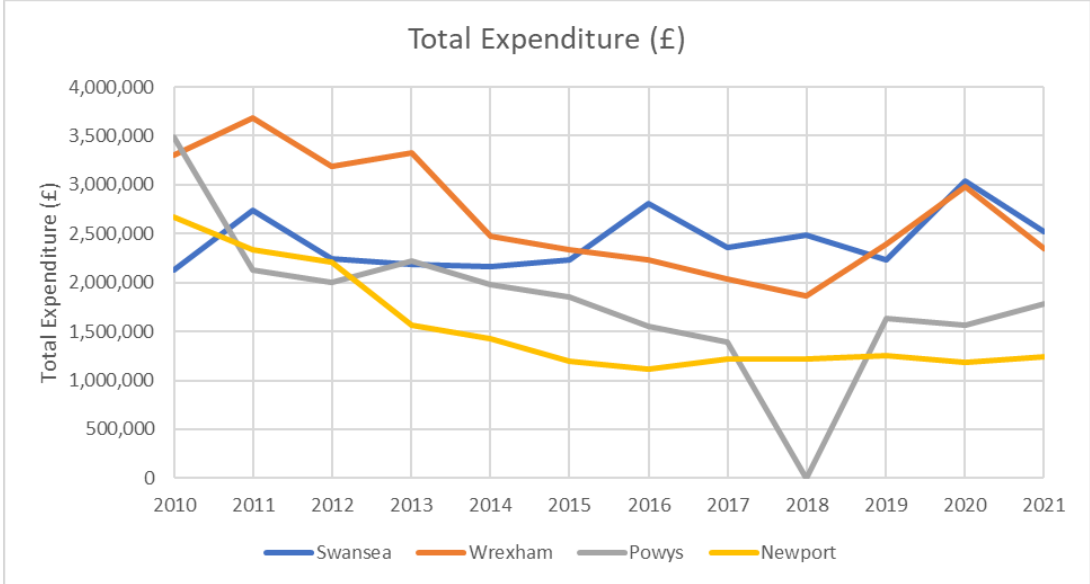
Annex E.4. Staffing Review

E.4.1

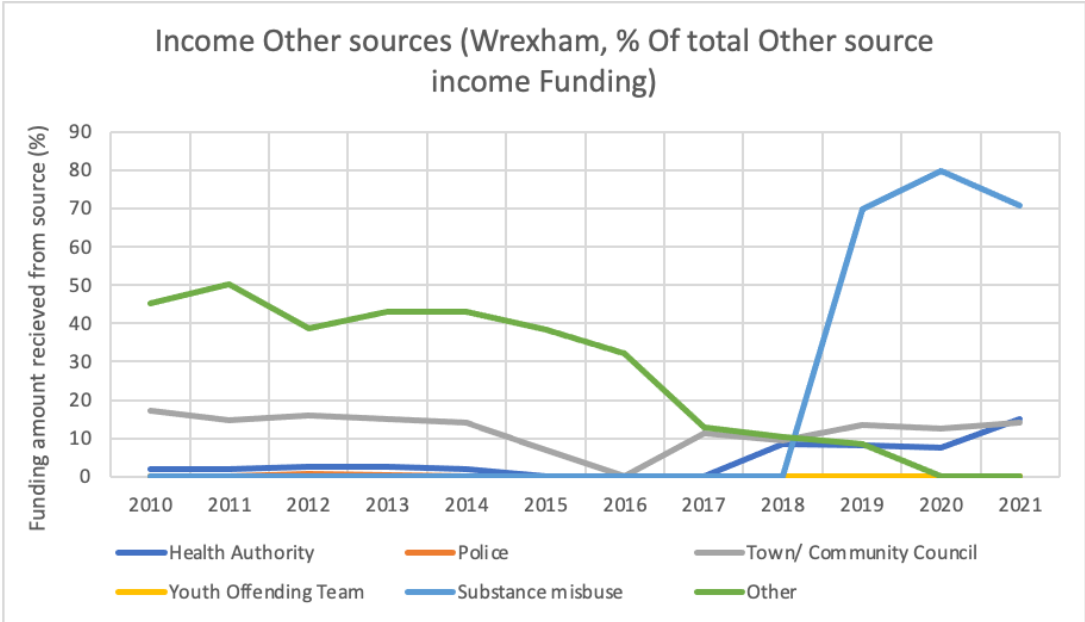No. of full time individuals
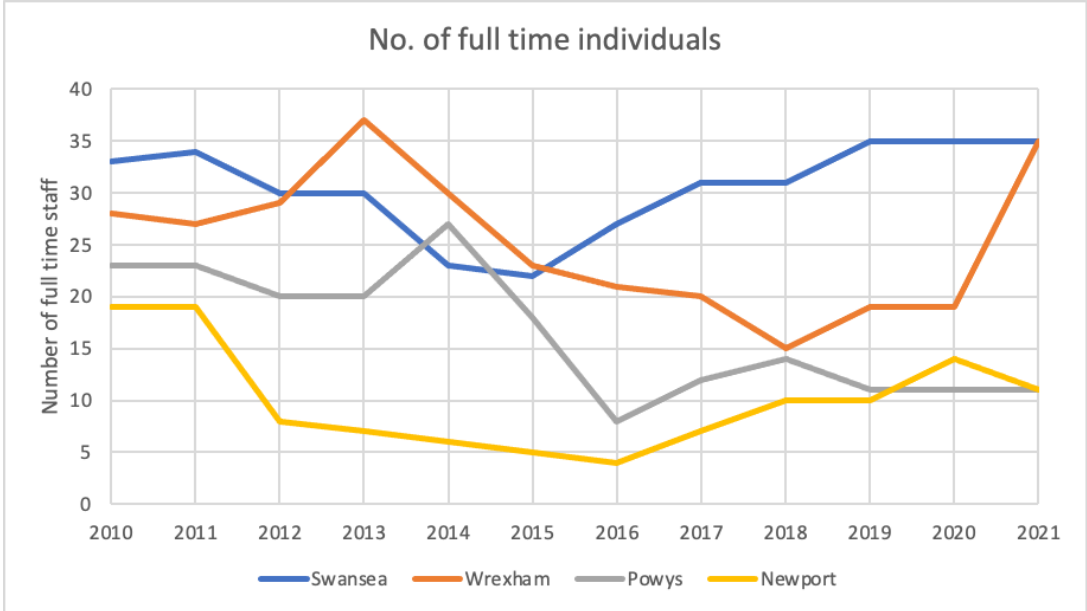
Annex E.5. Segmented Departmental Income

E.5.1
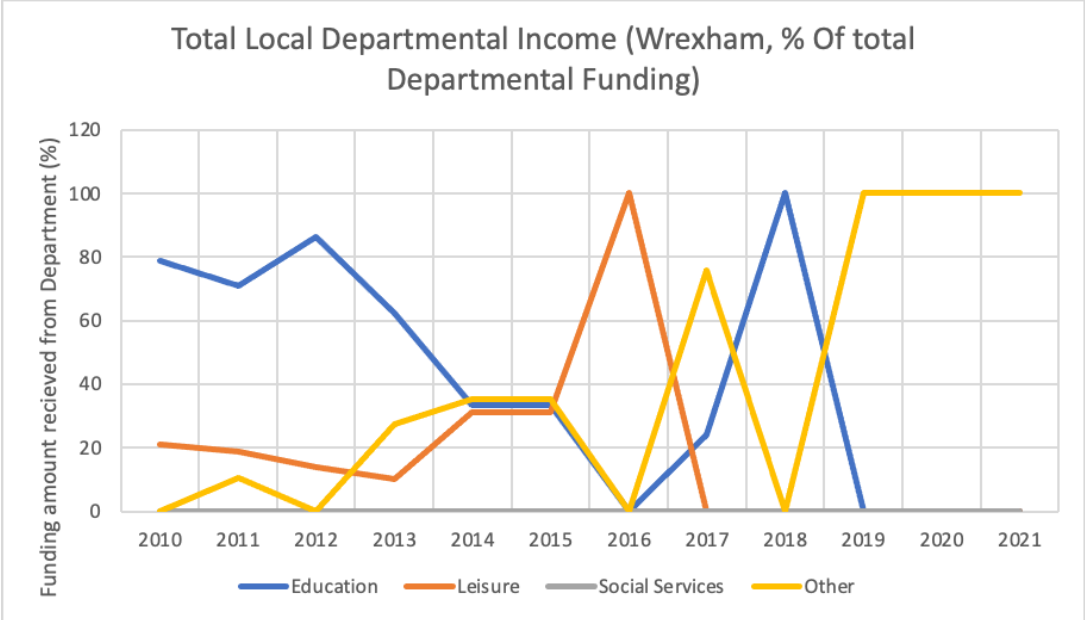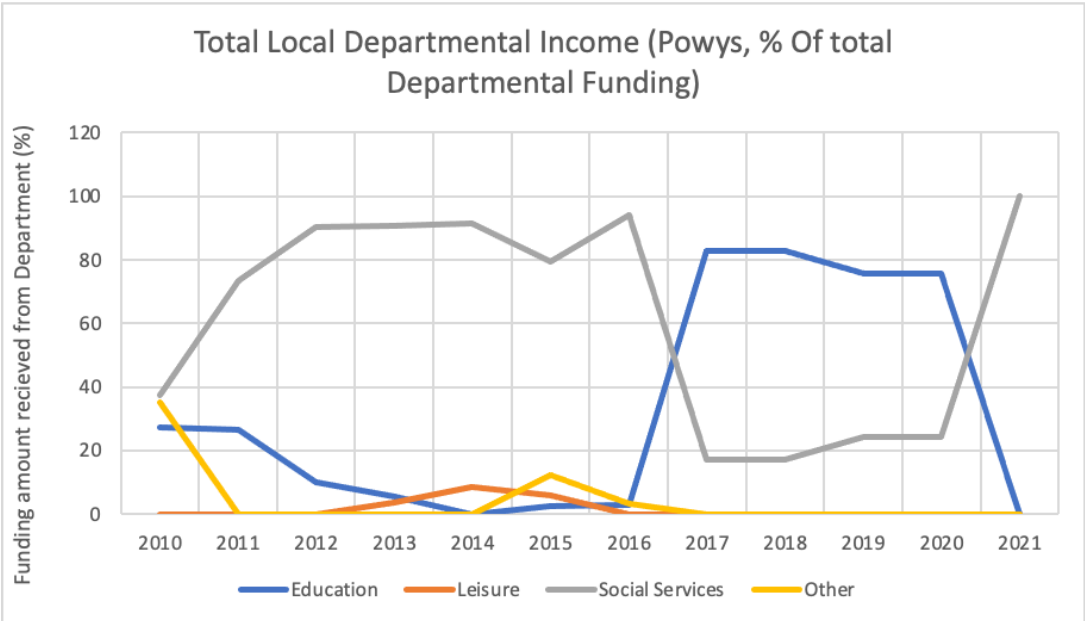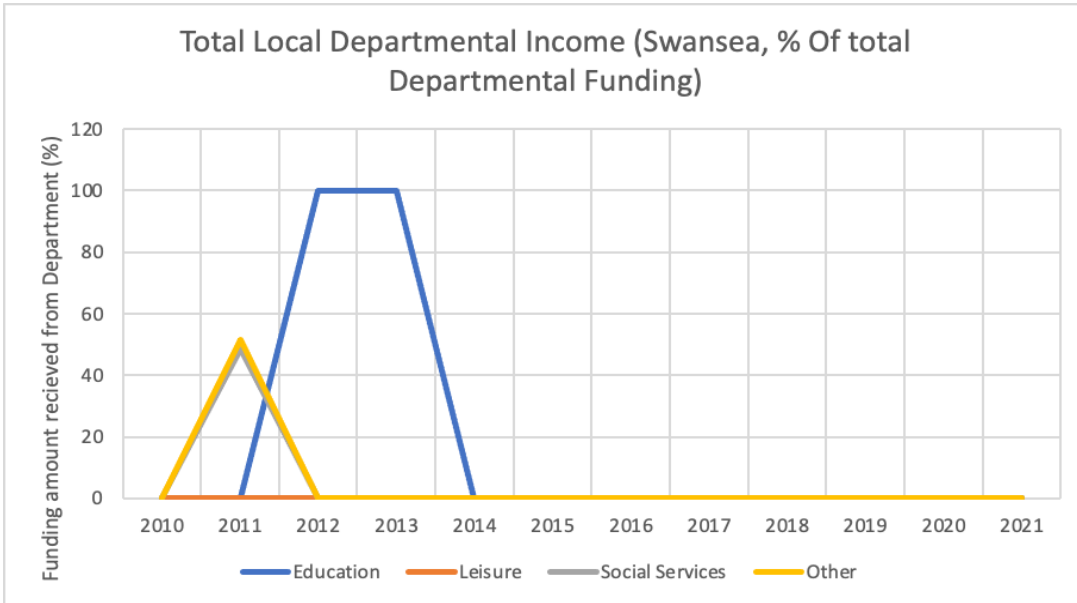
Total Local Departmental Income (Wrexham, % Of total Departmental Funding)

E.5.2

Total Local Departmental Income (Powys, % Of total Departmental Funding)

E.5.3

Total Local Departmental Income (Swansea, % Of total Departmental Funding)

E.5.4

Total Local Departmental Income (Newport, % Of total Departmental Funding)
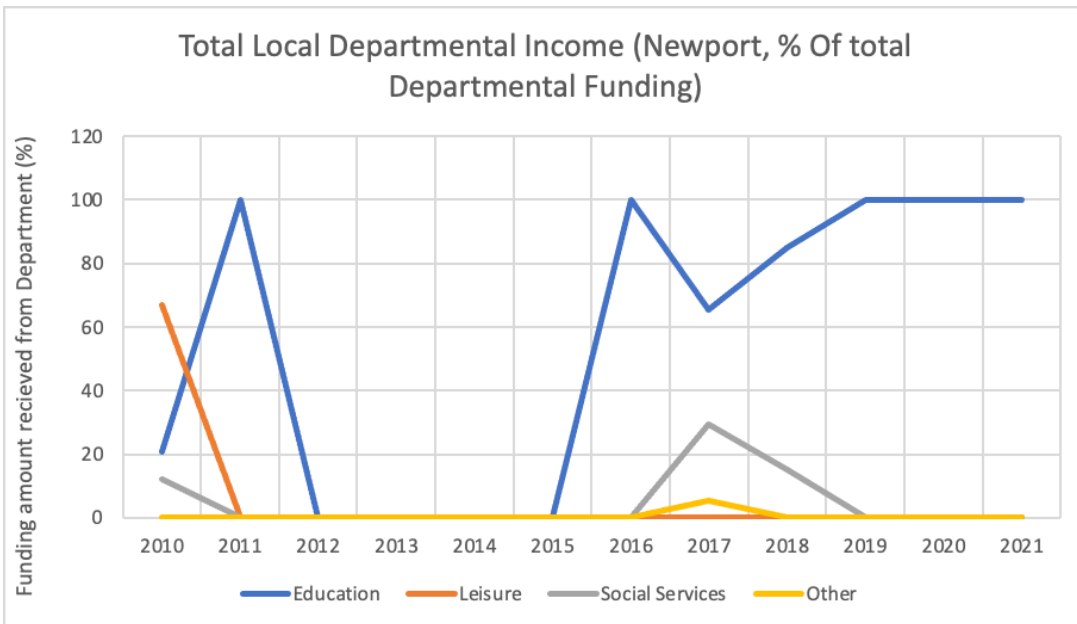
Source: All values calculated by the authors from the annual statistical release data and are based on similar components to the annual statistical release and no income funding for the segmented departmental income will show no line on the graph.
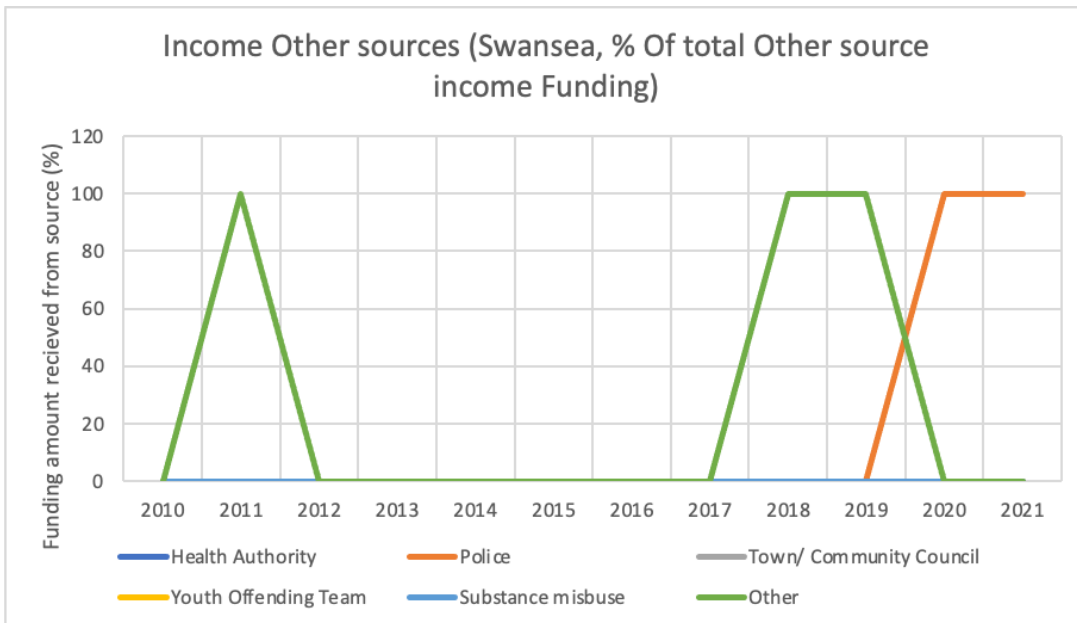
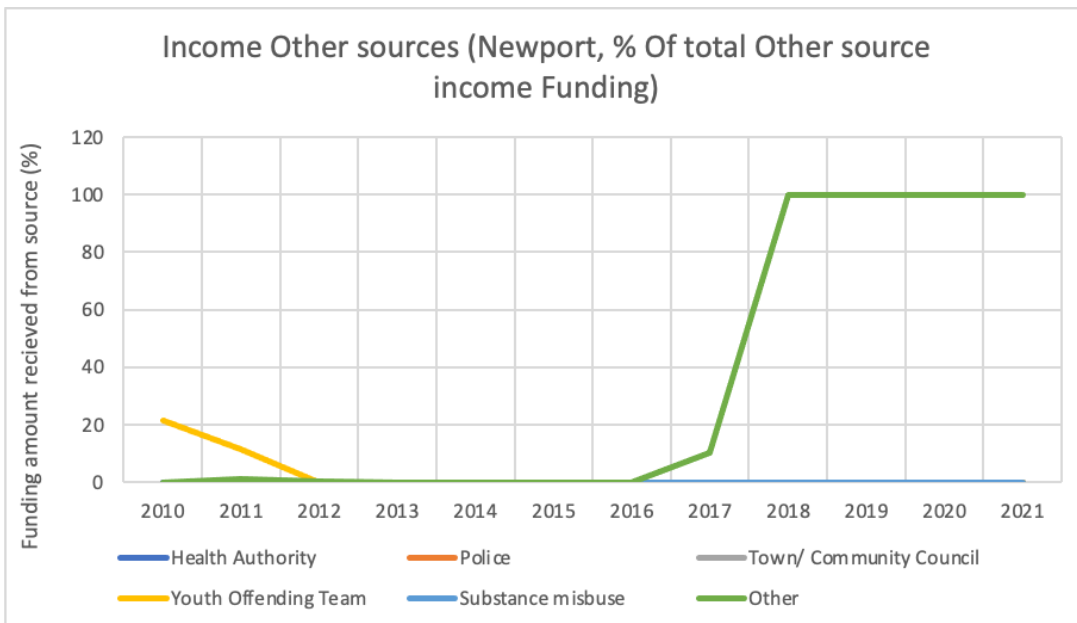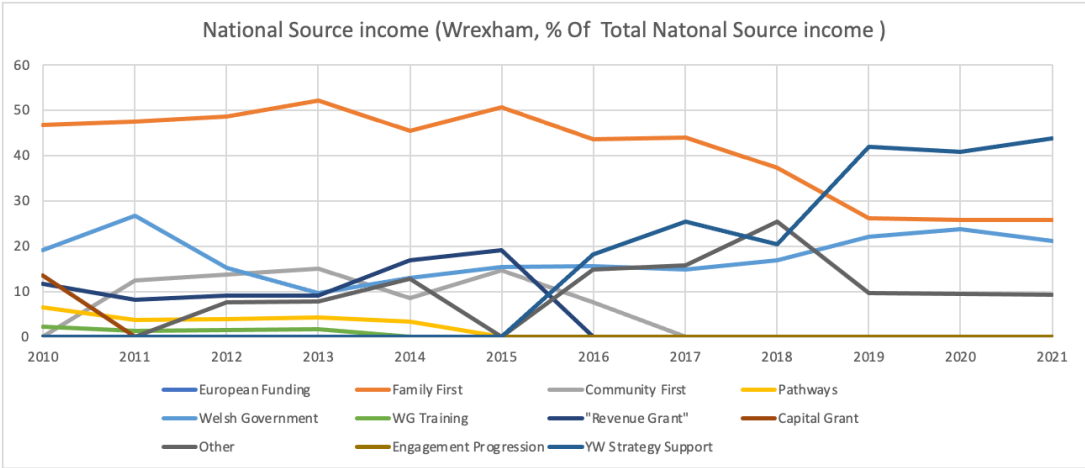# Annex E.6. Segmented Annual Audit Youth Work other source Income

E.6.1
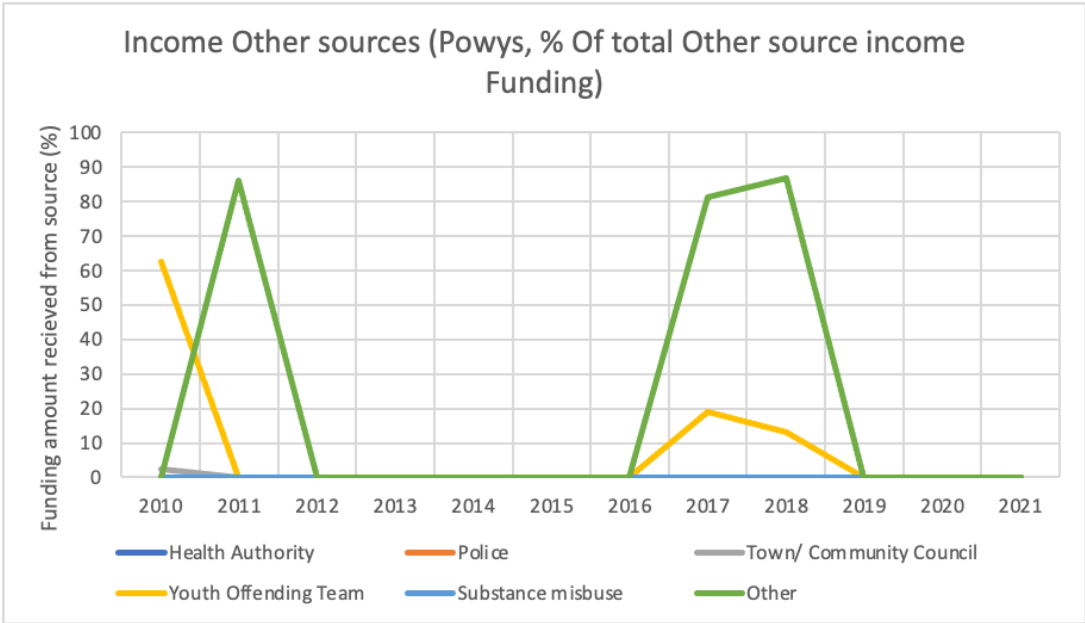
Income Other sources (Wrexham, % Of total Other source income Funding)

E.6.2

Income Other sources (Powys, % Of total Other source income Funding)

E.6.3

Income Other sources (Swansea, % Of total Other source income Funding)

E.6.4

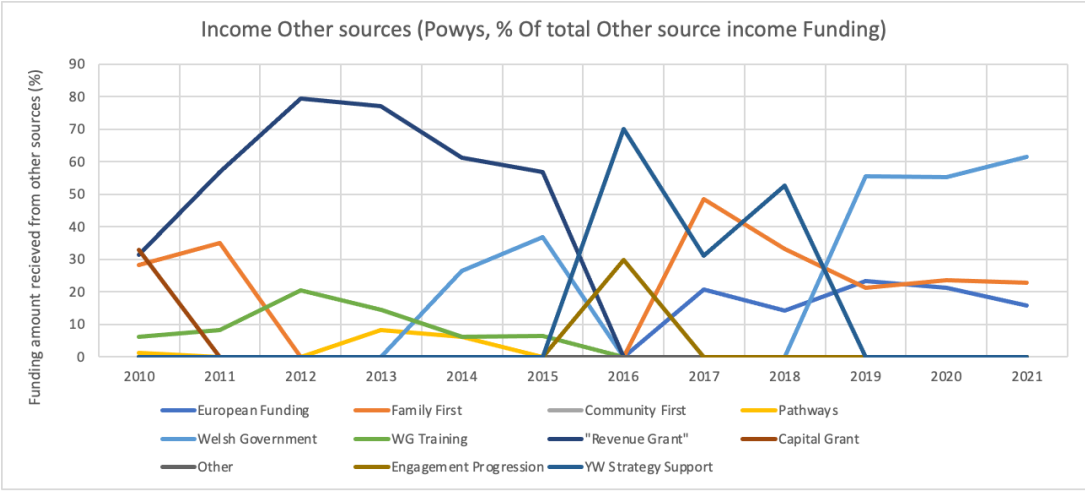Income Other sources (Newport, % Of total Other source income Funding)

Source for all figures: all values calculated are from the annual statistical release and calculations completed by the authors. The year numbers provided are for financial years. For example, 2021 data point is for the 2021-22 financial year. All numbers quoted are real, and CPI adjusted to 2015.

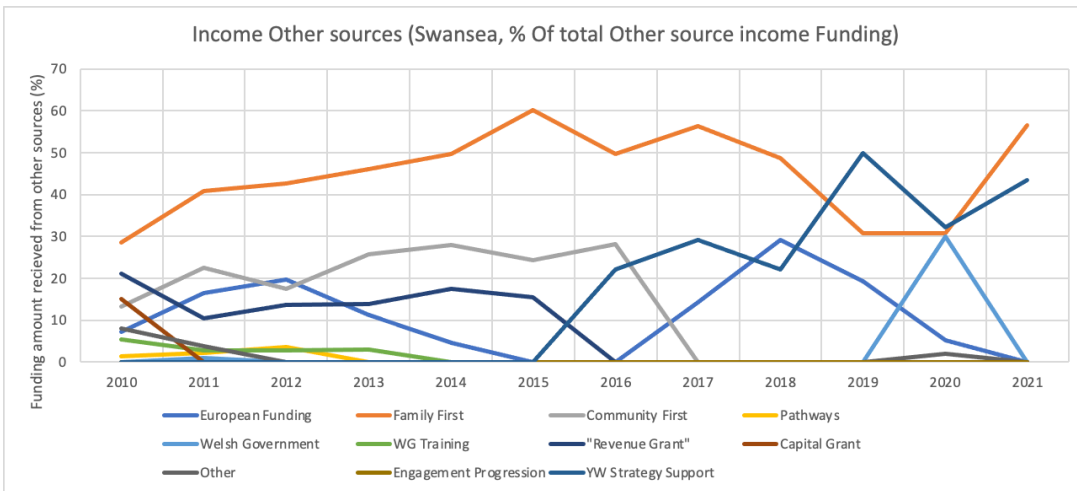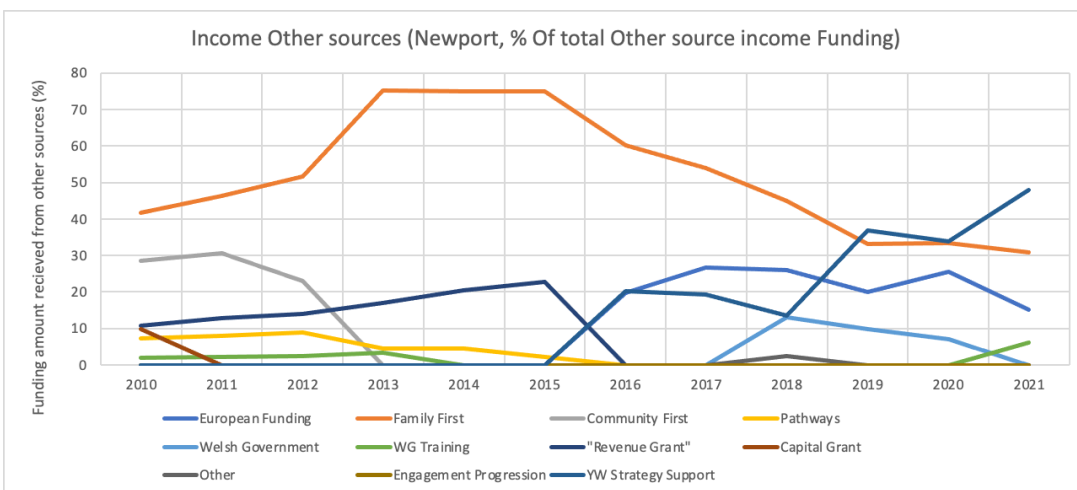# Annex E.7. Fraction of total National source income broken down by Local Authority

E.7.1

National Source income (Wrexham, % Of Total Natonal Source income)

E..7.2

Income Other sources (Powys, % Of total Other source income Funding)

E.7.3

Income Other sources (Swansea, % Of total Other source income Funding)

E.7.4

Income Other sources (Newport, % Of total Other source income Funding)

Source for all figures: all values calculated are from the annual statistical release and calculations completed by the authors. The year numbers provided are for financial years. For example, 2021 data point is for the 2021-22 financial year. All numbers quoted are real, and CPI adjusted to 2015.
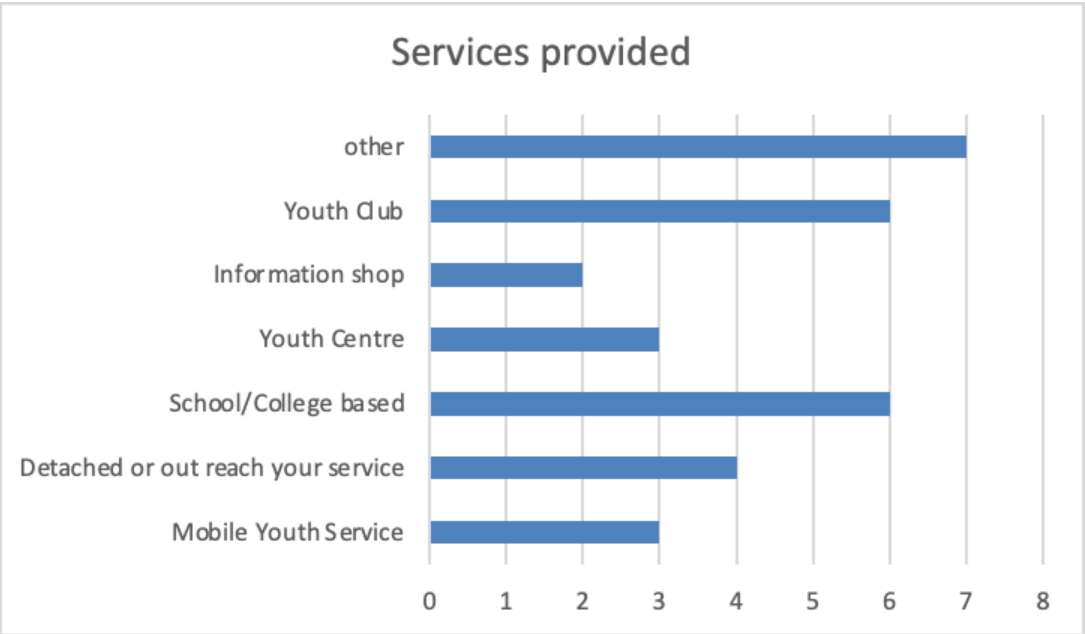
Annex E.8. Survey Results

E.8.1 Survey responses of organisational operational focus.

Geographical Operation focus in 2023

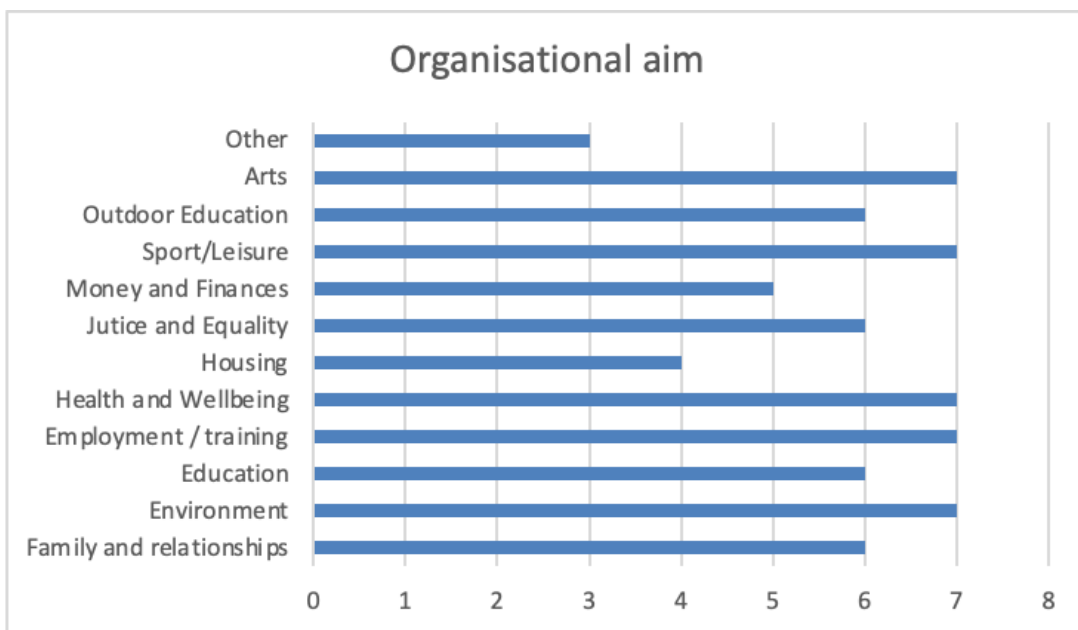| Focus	Frequency
Nationally	3
Regionally	5
Locally	7
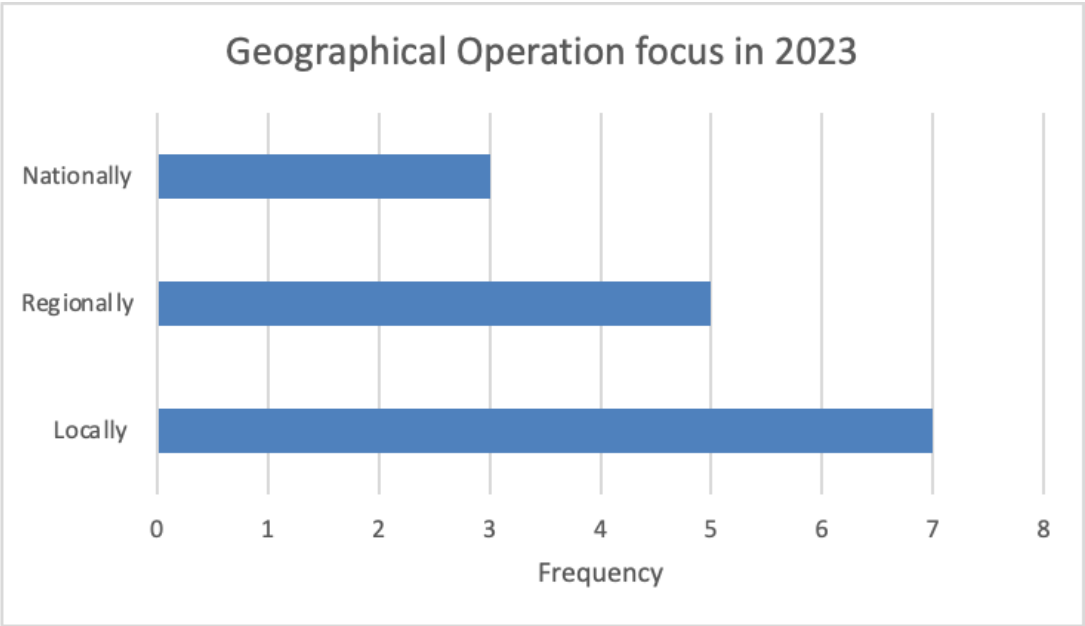
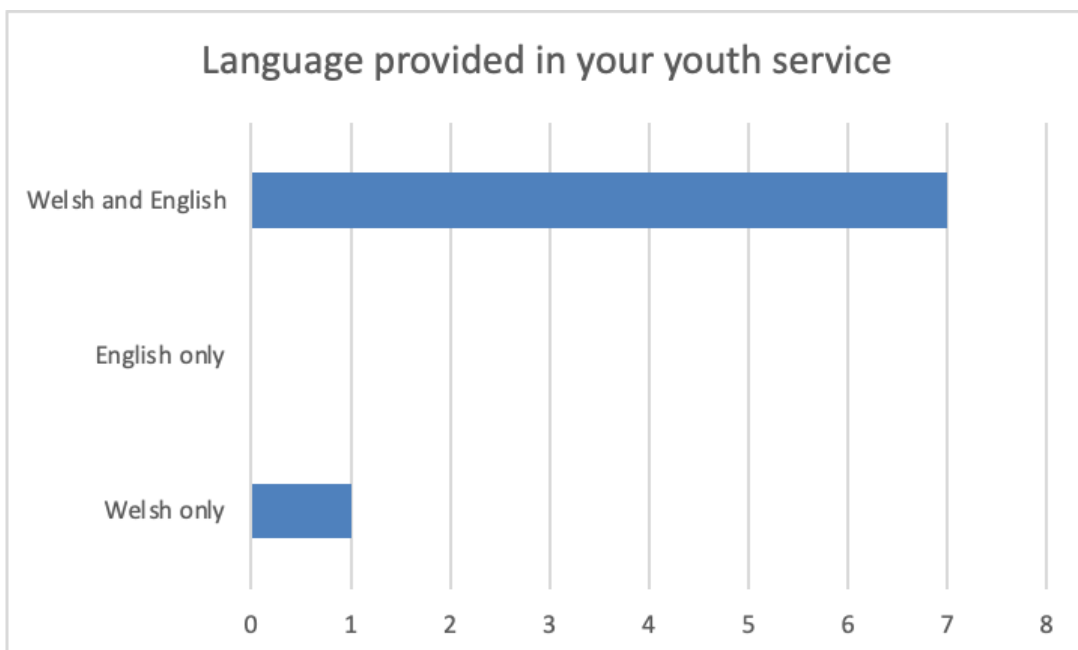Note: some organisations work in all three contexts and have been shown in each.

E.8.2 Survey responses of services provided per organisation
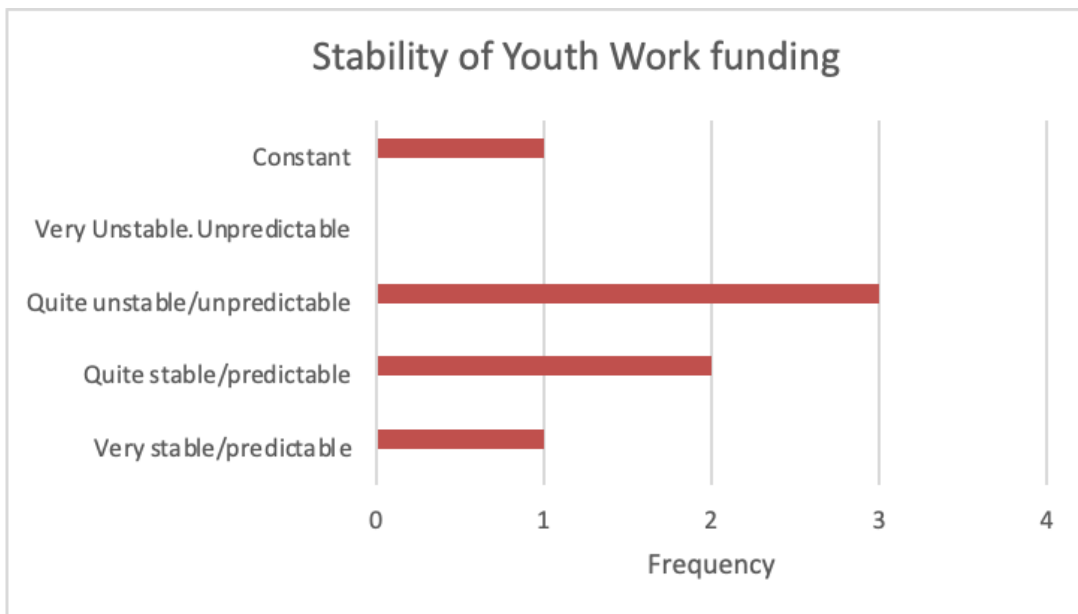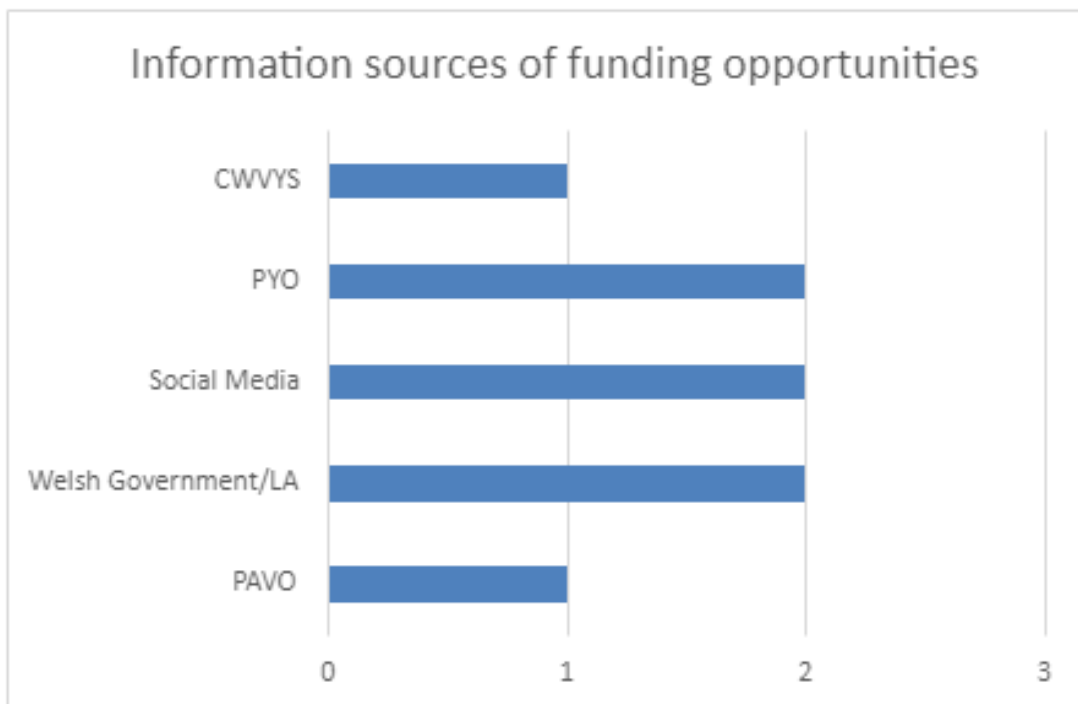
Services provided

Service	Frequency
other	7
Youth Club	6
Information shop	2
Youth Centre	3
School/College based	6
Detached or out reach your service	4
Mobile Youth Service	3

E.8.3

Organisational aim

Category	Value
Other	3
Arts	7
Outdoor Education	6
Sport/Leisure	7
Money and Finances	5
Jutice and Equality	6
Housing	4
Health and Wellbeing	7
Employment / training	7
Education	6
Environment	7
Family and relationships	6

E.8.4

Language provided in your youth service

Category	Value
Welsh and English	7
English only	0
Welsh only	1

E.8.5

Stability of Youth Work funding

Category	Frequency
Constant	1
Very Unstable. Unpredictable	0
Quite unstable/unpredictable	3
Quite stable/predictable	2
Very stable/predictable	1

Frequency

E.8.6

Information sources of funding opportunities

Source	Value
CWVYS	1
PYO	2
Social Media	2
Welsh Government/LA	2
PAVO	1

E.8.7

Barriers to fundings

Category	Frequency
Reporting is onerous	1
Core funding	2
Communication with funders	1
Annual grants	3
Takes to much time to complete form	2

E.8.8

Direcotorate of Local authority funding

Category	Frequency
Education	4
Children's Services	3
Community Safety	1

E.8.9

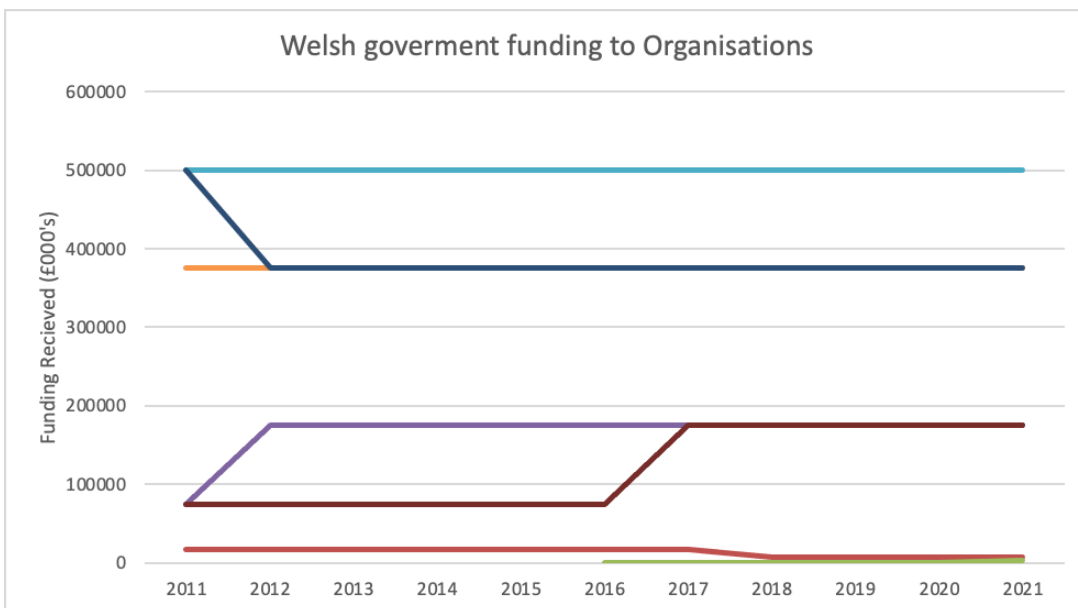Total Funding to Organisation
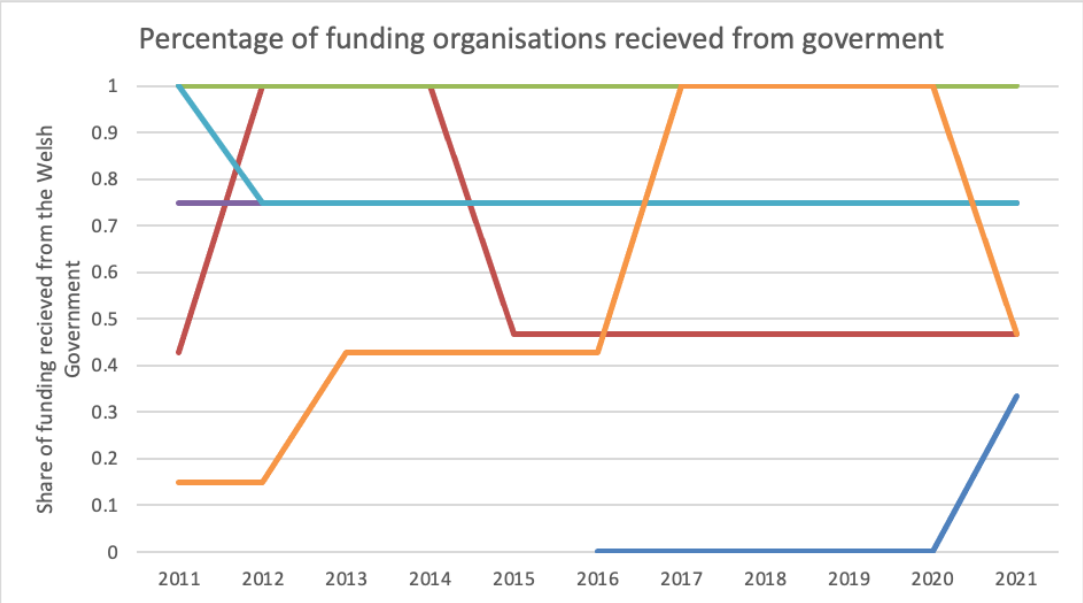
E.8.10

Welsh goverment funding to Organisations

E.8.11

Note. percentages can be calculated by multiplying the y-axis by 100. Source: All values calculated by the authors from the survey data collected.