

Profession: Youth and Community Worker

Roles and Responsibilities of the Professional

Role

The role of a Youth Worker is to promote the personal, educational and social development of young people aged between 11 and 25, with a focus on 13 to 19 year olds. Community Workers are not age restricted and work to build capacity within communities to effect social change.

Youth & Community Workers develop programmes and projects which aim to engage people, redress inequalities, value opinions, and empower individuals and groups to take action on issues affecting their lives, including health, education, unemployment and the environment, by developing positive skills and attitudes. They do this by responding to the needs and interests of people using informal education methods, values and principles, engaging them by building professional relationships and trust. In the wider community they may also work with the families and community groups involved in the life of the young person.

Youth workers aim to help young people achieve the aims and outcomes of the government guidelines contained in Every Child Matters, which are that children and young people should:

- Be healthy.
- Be safe.
- Enjoy and achieve.
- Make a positive contribution.
- Achieve economic wellbeing.

Responsibilities:

Key responsibilities and duties are laid down by the national validating body for the professional qualification and include:

- Working directly with young people to develop their social education by providing programmes of activities, services and facilities.
- Establishing contact with and guiding young people as part of local programmes.
- Providing advice and support to local community groups and agencies.
- Assisting in the motivation, retention, developing and support of staff and volunteers.
- Contributing to service development by planning, delivering and monitoring of local provisions.
- Implementing equal opportunities policies.
- Establishing and maintain relationships with young people and community groups.
- Maintaining quality of service provision including giving directions to other workers.

- First line management responsibility for workers and volunteers, including recruiting, developing and initial disciplining of staff.
- Initiating and monitoring developments of services, particularly with other agencies.
- Performing and ensuring the discharge of administrative duties (including budget control, record keeping and health and safety).
- Meeting, liaising and networking with police, educational establishments, social services, Connexions, Youth Offending teams and other agencies, to address issues and promote opportunities for young people.
- Working with parents and community groups to win support for improved provision and acting as an advocate for young people's interests.
- Identifying and pursuing sources of funding for projects to improve services and/or resources for young people.
- Drawing up business plans, writing reports and making formal presentations to funding bodies.
- Managing and developing a range of services.
- Managing and developing staff and facilities.
- Working with other agencies to develop services across the community.
- Design, lead and implement a youth work curriculum.
- Leading project development and implementation.

Patient/User Group

- Young people aged between 13 and 19 and those with learning difficulties up to the age of 25.
- Families and communities.

Employment

The Principal employers are:

- Local authorities.
- Voluntary organisations such as the YMCA and Barnardo's.
- Privately run exclusion projects.
- Schools and colleges.
- Connexions.
- Churches and community or faith groups.
- Youth Offending Teams (YOTs).
- Social Services.
- National Health Services.

Governing Body

The National Youth Agency (NYA) through their Education and Training Standards Committee (ETS), the Wales ETS and the North/South ETS of Ireland operate a process of professional validation of Higher Education (HE) degree courses approved by the JNC as conferring professionally qualified status in youth and community work. The Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers (JNC), the Association of Principal Youth and Community Officers (APYCO) and the Principal Youth Officers Group (Wales) have a joint commitment to retain and develop JNC terms and conditions as the most appropriate to youth and community work.