

## **Appendix 5 - European and Regional Strategic Context**

5.1 Education is a devolved matter for which the Executive is responsible and education, including youth, is a matter for the Minister of Education. Although the policy context is separate, it is nevertheless useful to examine the thrust of youth policies elsewhere. It is clear that across a range of regions, countries and at the European level, youth work is on the continuum of educational and lifelong learning provision, and although it has distinctive defining characteristics which set it apart from formal education, it seeks the same long term outcomes for young people.

### **European**

5.2 In November 2010, the Council of the European Union adopted a Resolution on youth work. This resolution sets out a renewed framework for European co-operation between EU countries in providing better opportunities for young people. This renewed framework is based on the '*EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering*' (2010-2018), which recognises youth work as out-of-school education managed by professional or voluntary 'youth workers' which contributes to the development of young people and that, together with families and other professionals, can help deal with unemployment, educational underachievement and social exclusion, as well as providing leisure time activities. It aims to create more opportunities for young people in education and employment, improving access and securing full participation of young people in society.

### **Ireland**

5.3 In the South of Ireland Youth Work Act, 2001, youth work is defined as: "*a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.*" For the purpose of the Act, a young

person means a person who is under the age of 25 years. Particular regard is given to young people between the ages of 10 and 21 and to those who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

## **Scotland**

5.4 In Scotland, *Moving Forward: A Strategy For Improving Young People's Chances Through Youth Work (2007)* sets out that youth work has a significant role to play in delivering our broad vision for Scotland's young people – that they are nurtured, safe, active, healthy, achieving, included, respected and responsible. Youth work opportunities can also support young people to live their lives as confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. Youth work has a major part to play in providing life-enhancing experiences for children and young people – and the learning and development opportunities it offers must be seen and valued as an integral part of what society provides for young people across the board – children's services, school education, post-school education and training.

5.5 The strategy aims to support long-term growth in the sector with more opportunities for young people, volunteers and youth workers, better facilities and more effective, targeted support at a national level. The strategy also includes a range of shorter-term measures to put in place new support structures and boost the capacity of the sector to take forward the longer-term vision.

## **Wales**

5.6 In Wales, a consultation document<sup>1</sup> on the support services to young people for 11 to 25 year olds published in December 2009 highlights the youth service as an intrinsic element of the wide ranging youth support services

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/consultation/101209youthsupportsumen.pdf> - end of consultation  
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encompassing a range of community-based, learning-related activities delivered mainly in young people's leisure time. Their Curriculum Statement, published in 2007, sets out that youth work provision should be determined by the needs, wants, interests and aspirations of young people and that youth work provides or facilitates places and relationships within which young people can enjoy themselves, feel secure, supported and valued, learn to take greater control of their lives, and recognise and resist the damaging influences which may affect them. It is non-formal, informal and structured educational programmes which challenge both the institutions and young people themselves to enhance their personal, social and political development, and provides access to relevant information, advice, guidance and counselling which includes the understanding of rights and responsibilities.

## **England**

5.7 While there is no specific national strategy for youth work in England, *Aiming High for Young People* (2007 and 2010) sets out the then government's long-term vision to transform leisure-time opportunities, activities and support services for young people in England aged 13 to 19. It recognises the link between academic qualifications, skills such as literacy and numeracy and the prospects in the labour market as adults, as well as the increased demand for skills and abilities in addition to formal qualifications, such as social and emotional skills. A key objective is to create more '*things to do and places to go*' run by trained adults, recognising that participating in structured, positive leisure time activities can support the development of young people's social and emotional skills. *Aiming High* also acknowledges that strong families, with interested and involved parents, remain the biggest influences on young people's social development and that young people who do not have this can disengage from formal education. It recognises that it is these young people who can benefit the most from being involved in positive activities.

5.8 In 2011 Department for Education in England published a series of documents called *Positive for Youth* which set out a new approach to cross-Government policy for young people aged 13-19 in England. It brings together all of the Government's policies for this age group, presenting a single vision across the interests of at least nine Government departments. It has been produced with young people and youth professionals through extensive collaboration and consultation. *Positive for Youth* sets out a shared vision for how all parts of society – including councils, schools, charities and businesses – can work together in partnership to support families and improve outcomes for young people, particularly those who are most disadvantaged or vulnerable.

