



**MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development

**Report on the
2006 Questionnaire on Professional Development
and Training for Youth Workers**

February 2007

Preface

Between September and November 2006, the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) conducted a questionnaire on the professional development and training needs of youth workers in New Zealand as part of a wider project on youth work in New Zealand; the Youth Workers Workforce Development Project.

The responses from the questionnaire provide an in-depth understanding of past, present and future training needs and desires of youth workers. The responses also complement *Real Work* which is the publication detailing the most comprehensive assessment of the state of youth work in New Zealand; conducted in 2004 and 2005 by the National Youth Workers Network¹.

The responses from the questionnaire will assist MYD in seeking solutions to help address the training and professional development needs of youth workers in New Zealand in ways that are meaningful for them. This will contribute to the desired outcome of the Youth Workers Workforce Development Project which is to create a more professionalised and safe youth worker workforce for young people who are accessing these services.

The Ministry would like to especially thank John Harrington, Rod Baxter and Gae Neil whose assistance in the development of the questionnaire was greatly appreciated. Also to Toni Houghton and Tania Cooper who helped in the dissemination of the questionnaire and all the dedicated youth workers who responded and forwarded the questionnaire around their networks.

¹ From October 2006 the Network has been incorporated body and is now known as the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa

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1.0 Executive summary

The main purpose of this questionnaire was to ascertain the training and professional development needs of youth workers. The responses from the questionnaire will assist the Ministry of Youth Development in seeking solutions to help address these needs and the ultimate outcome of a more professionalised and safe youth worker workforce for young people who are accessing their services.

For the purpose of the questionnaire, youth workers were defined as:

“people who provide a service to build relationships with young people in order to foster their wellbeing”.

In total we received 400 completed questionnaires, which were entered into a central database and analysed in-house by the Ministry.

The responses indicate that youth workers are keen to undertake training specific to their profession in delivery methods that enable them to carry out their normal day-to-day functions, and do not interfere with their current work obligations, such as through block course delivery.

1.1 Summary of findings

The analysis of the questionnaire confirmed much of what we knew from *Real Work*.

Key findings of the questionnaire include:

- Fifty-two percent had not completed prior youth work training, while 47 percent had, 1% did not record a response
- of the 47% that had completed prior youth work training, 46% did their training part-time, 31% did their training full-time, 2% completed their training using a combination of full-time and part-time study, while 21% responded “other”
- Seventy-four percent of respondents were not currently undertaking any youth work training compared with 25% who were, 1% did not record a response
- Twenty-two percent of those currently undertaking youth work training were doing so full-time, 59% were studying part-time, 19% are studying via a variety of other means
- Sixty-three percent of respondents would prefer to do future training by way of a block course, 35% part-time, 9% full-time and 5% would not like to do any future training²
- Seventy-three percent of respondents would be motivated to undertake further training if training awards were available to help with the cost, only 4% would not undertake further training if assisted by a training award while 22% were unsure, 1% did not record a response
- Sixty-two percent of all respondents currently receive professional supervision, 32% do not, 5% usually receive professional supervision, but at the time of the questionnaire were not, 1% did not record a response

² Some respondents chose more than one delivery method

- Sixty-seven percent of respondents belonged to a network or collective, 23% did not, 9% were not sure and 2% did not record a response
- Fifty-eight percent were aware of a national organisation they believed represents youth workers
- of the respondents aware of a nationally representative body for youth workers, approximately 47% percent identified the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa as this body
- Sixty-one percent of respondents were female, 36% male, 3% did not record a response
- the most common age bracket of respondents was 25-34 years (33%), followed by 35-44 years (24%), 18-24 years (18%), 45-54 years (17%), 55 years or older (5%), under 18 years (2%), 3% did not record a response

2.0 Introduction

The New Zealand youth worker workforce comprises a large number of volunteers, and for the most part has little access to formal qualifications and training opportunities. This means that youth workers working with young people, who are often vulnerable, have at times, only a limited skill base. This presents a real risk to both the young people and youth workers themselves. It also poses a risk to Government who are increasingly utilising youth workers.

The current lack of a national code of ethics combined with no requirement to participate in formal networks creates further risk, as this means many youth workers are able to operate in isolation, without supports or adequate supervision to ensure their work with young people is safe. Some such youth workers have drawn into question the integrity of the entire youth worker workforce through their abuse of power.

It is believed that a more highly qualified and trained workforce, combined with adherence to a nationally agreed code of ethics and participation in formal networks, will increase the safety of young people accessing youth work services and move youth work towards being viewed as a profession in its own right.

To ascertain the training and professional development needs of youth workers, MYD developed a questionnaire for youth workers in consultation with some key people in the youth work sector. The questionnaire was disseminated widely among the sector in mid-September 2006. The initial closing date for the questionnaire was 24 October 2006, but this was extended to 3 November to enable further discussion at the Involve'06 Conference.

The purpose of the questionnaire was not to replicate responses from the 2004/2005 study *Real Work*. Where MYD asked replica questions, we provide a comparison with the response recorded in *Real Work*.

The questionnaire also enabled us to ask questions that were not part of *Real Work*, particularly in relation to the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa, and the level of understanding of this organisation, within the youth work sector.

In total we received 400 completed questionnaires, which were entered into a central database and analysed in-house. The findings and analysis of these responses is discussed in this report.

3.0 Research objectives

The purpose of the questionnaire was to establish the level of need for training and professional development in the youth worker workforce in New Zealand, understand the level of existing training and the preferred methods of delivery for training.

In addition, we were keen to establish the level of professional supervision³ taking place in the sector and the level of understanding and support that exists for the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa.

Broadly, the questionnaire set out to address the following areas:

- the percentage of the youth worker workforce in paid employment and purely voluntary (un-paid) employment, in respect to their role as a youth worker
- the percentage of the youth worker workforce that has undertaken and/or is currently undertaking youth work training
- the percentage of the youth worker workforce interested in undertaking [further] youth work training
- the specific subjects/topic areas relevant to youth workers that they would like to understand more fully
- if youth workers would be motivated to undertake further training if assisted financially by a study award
- the level of professional supervision taking place in the youth work sector
- the level of participation of youth workers in networks and collectives
- the level of knowledge of and support for the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa as a national body representing the interests of youth workers in New Zealand.

³ reflection by a youth worker on their youth work practice with a trained professional supervisor outside their organisation of employment

4.0 Research methodology

4.1 Research parameters

As there is nothing to specifically distinguish youth workers from people who may as part of their job work with young people, we required respondents to be currently practising as a youth worker in New Zealand, which we defined as follows:

“people who provide a service to build relationships with young people in order to foster their wellbeing”.

This includes paid and unpaid people working in the youth sector, whose primary focus in their role as a youth worker is fostering relationships with young people. They may include youth leaders, youth mentors, rangatahi development workers, youth pastors/ministers, youth liaison workers, youth transition workers and youth work volunteers. They may also be employed in an alternative vocation, undertaking youth work in their “spare time”.

The project DOES NOT include:

- people who may be working with young people, but for whom that work is not their primary focus, for example, Work and Income case managers, ACC case managers
- people who are qualified professionals working with young people but in another capacity, for example, school teachers, family counsellors, psychologists
- school guidance counsellors.

4.2 Methodology

The questionnaire employed a mostly quantitative research method in the form of a written questionnaire that could be completed electronically and emailed back to MYD or filled-in manually and either posted or faxed in return. The questionnaire was able to be downloaded from the MYD website and a number of questionnaires were also provided to key youth worker networks for dissemination.

Where it was not possible for respondents to simply provide an either/or type response, a more qualitative method was used and personal views and experiences of the youth workers sought. While these responses have been varied, and as a result are less easy to count, they have provided invaluable information on the sorts of and providers of training most commonly being accessed, as well as currently relevant areas for further training.

5.0 Training

The purpose of this section was to determine what the specific training needs of youth workers were, including previous training undertaken, current training and future training aspirations.

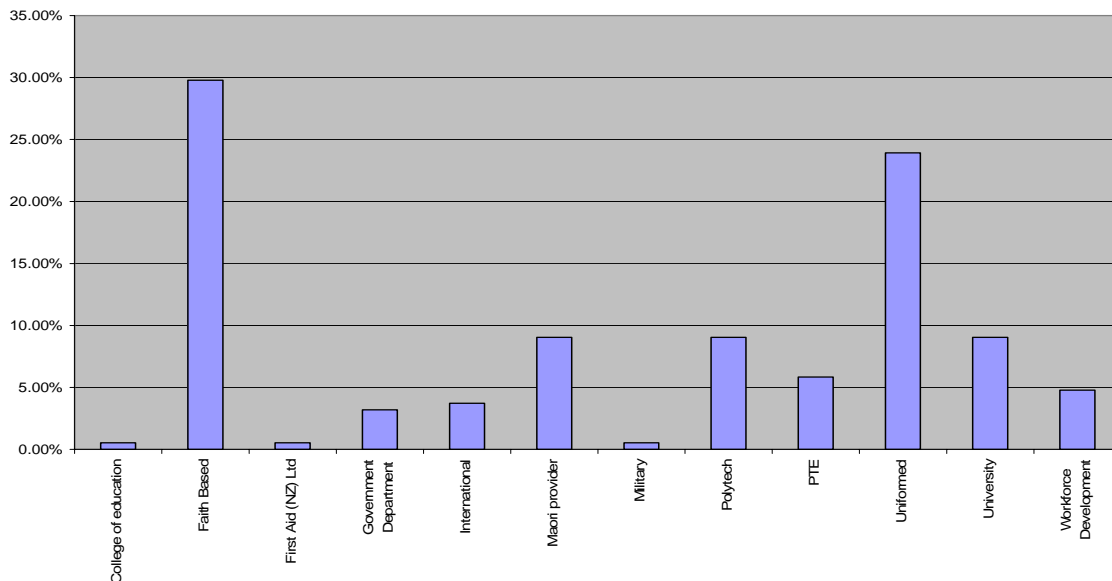
5.1 Role as youth worker

The survey revealed that 62% of youth workers receive payment for their work as a youth worker. This can be further broken down to show that 47% of youth workers are paid for all their youth work, with 14% being paid for some of their youth work and providing a volunteer service for the remainder. Thirty-eight percent of youth workers were unpaid or volunteer youth workers. This matches the findings from *Real Work* which reported that 38% of youth workers were volunteers.

5.2 Previous training

The workforce was similarly split with regard to previous training in youth work fields. Respondents were asked to include only formal training in youth work as opposed to one off seminar type courses that although can be informative and useful, but do not build towards a formal qualification. The survey identified that 52% of youth workers had no previous training while 47% had undertaken some form of training.⁴ This too closely matches the “*Real Work*” finding of 51% of youth workers entering youth work with no qualifications.

Of the 47% who had undertaken previous training, 46% did so part time, 31% full time and 23% in other ways such as casual, weekend or one-day courses.⁵ Training was undertaken with a number of different providers, as detailed in the graph below.



⁴ 1% did not record a response

⁵ 2% did not record a response

The most common providers of training previously undertaken were faith-based organisations, and uniformed organisations, such as the Girl Guides, which accounted for 30% and 24% of previous training undertaken respectively. In addition, 10.5% did their training at a Private Training Establishment, 9% with a Māori provider, a further 9% at a polytechnic and 6.5% at a university. The remaining 11% did their training with the military, a government department, College of Education or overseas.

Thirty-five percent of respondents gained a non-New Zealand Qualifications Authority recognised qualification; this mostly represents training by uniformed organisations. Thirty percent gained a faith-based qualification, 7% a Bachelor's Degree a further 7% gained a Level 4 National Certificate in Youth Work and 5.5% a Level 3 National Certificate in Youth Work. Five and-a-half percent gained various Certificate level qualifications, 4.5% various Diploma level qualifications and the remaining 5% gained government base, military, or post-graduate qualifications.

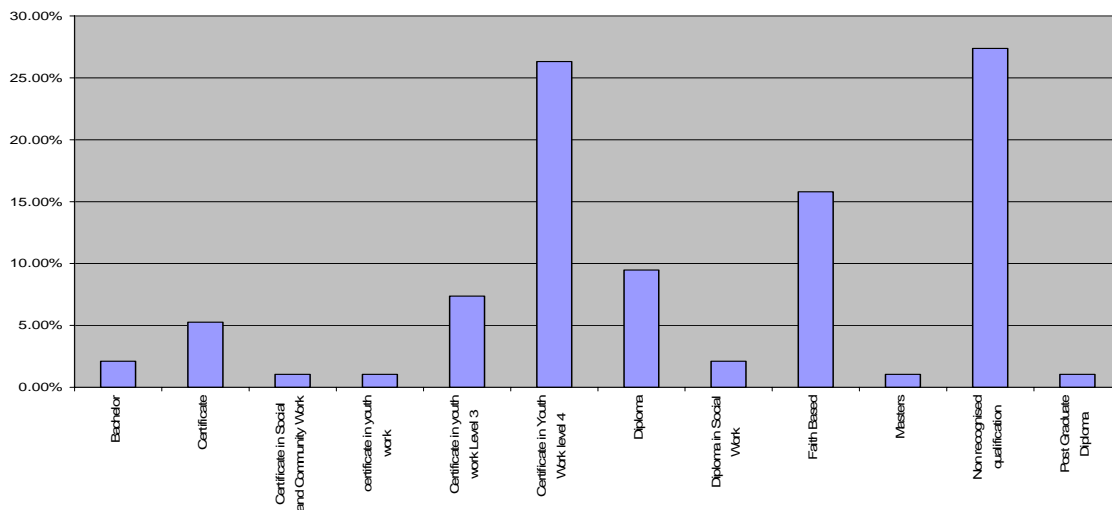
Twenty-four percent of the youth workers paid for their previous training themselves, 24% by the youth worker's employer, 17% by uniformed organisations they volunteer with, 6% by a combination of the youth worker and employer, 1.8% used the Department of Internal Affairs' youth worker training scheme and 27% by various other means.

5.3 Current training

Seventy-four percent of respondents were not undertaking any training at the time of filling in the questionnaire compared with 25% who were.⁶

Of the 25% undertaking training, 59% are doing so part time, 22% full time and 19% in various other ways such as casual, block courses and on the job training.

Twenty-six percent were training with a Private Training Establishment, 23% with a Māori provider, 20% with a uniformed organisation, 15% with a faith-based provider, 7% at a university and 3% at a polytechnic. The qualifications currently being worked towards are detailed in the graph below.



⁶ 1% did not record a response

This shows that 27% are working toward a non-recognised qualification, such as those offered by uniformed organisations, 26% toward a Level 4 National Certificate in Youth Work, 16% toward a faith based qualification, 11.5% toward various kinds of Diplomas, 7.5% towards the Level 3 National Certificate in Youth work, 7% toward various kinds of certificates and the remaining 5% toward graduate and post-graduate qualifications.

Thirty-seven percent of youth worker’s employers were paying for their current training, 19% of youth workers were paying for it themselves; including using a Student Loan, 15% by uniformed organisations, 3.5% a combination of the youth worker and employer, 2.5% the Department of Internal Affairs’ youth worker training scheme and 23% by other means.

5.4 Additional training

- sixty-three percent stated they would prefer any additional training to be by way of block-type courses
- thirty-five percent part time
- nine percent full time
- five percent would not like to do any future training.⁷

Respondents were asked to name as many subjects as they were interested in for future training. The table below highlights the 15 most commonly cited subjects and the frequency of citation. It is important to note, however, that the questionnaire also cited examples to help engage respondents and these may have led the youth workers to list these options more frequently than may have otherwise been the case.

Subject	Frequency of citation (no.)
event management	94
communication skills	90
risk assessment	79
self-care	74
sexuality	67
Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa	66
safe and ethical practice	63
drugs and alcohol	35
counselling	25
suicide prevention	19
mental health	15
youth development	14
working with families	13
working cross-culturally	12
spiritual/religious	11

⁷ Some respondents chose more than one delivery method

5.6 Training award motivation

When asked if a training award to help towards the costs of further study would motivate them to undertake further study or training, 73% said yes, 22% didn't know, or were unsure and 4% said no.⁸

Real Work cited cost as the second largest barrier, behind time, to youth workers undertaking further training.

5.7 Supervision

Professional supervision is time spent with an external supervisor, outside the youth worker's organisation of employment.

The results of the questionnaire show that 62% of youth workers currently receive supervision, however, 32% do not receive professional supervision and 5% percent of youth workers who usually receive professional supervision, were not, for a range of reasons, receiving it at the time of the questionnaire.⁹ This is similar to the findings of *Real Work* which reported that 55% of youth workers currently receive professional supervision, 35% do not, and 9% of youth workers usually did, but were not at the time of the *Real Work* survey.

The following reasons were stated as why professional supervision was not a part of the youth workers' job.

Reason	Frequency of citation (%)
no capacity	27
happy with supervision (not professional) that I currently receive, eg informal de-briefs with pastors, cultural etc	20
do not feel I need it	19
no funding available	10
not offered within organisation	9
not aware it existed	6
lack of a suitable supervisor	5
no time for it	3

⁸ 1% did not record a response

⁹ 1% did not record a response

6.0 Networks

The purpose of this section was to establish the extent to which youth workers are involved in, and aware of, local and/or national youth worker networks and collectives.

6.1 Membership

The results of the questionnaire show that 67% of youth workers belong to a network or a collective. Twenty-three percent do not and 9% did not know or were not sure, for instance if their place of employment belonged to a wider network or collective.¹⁰ This is similar to the findings of *Real Work* which reported that 69% of youth workers have some involvement with a network. It is important to note, however, that a number of questionnaires were disseminated by youth worker networks. This may have impacted on the responses we received and may mean that the actual number of youth workers belonging to networks is less than reported here.

The table below details the types of networks and collectives that youth workers listed as belonging to.

Name of Network / Collective	No	%
Regional Network	122	46.5
Faith-based	46	17.63
Uniformed	62	23.76
National Body	13	4.98
Other	18	6.89

When asked if they had heard of a national organisation representing the interests of youth workers in New Zealand, 58% were aware of such an organisation and 42% were unaware. Of the 58% who were aware of an organisation 38% believed that it was representative of them in their role as a youth worker, 49% did not know or were unsure and 13% did not believe the organisation was representative of them.

The table below lists the organisations named as representative of youth workers in New Zealand and the frequency with which they were named.

Organisations named as representative of youth workers		
National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa	76	47%
Girl Guides New Zealand	21	13%
Baptist Youth Ministries	15	9%
New Zealand Association for Adolescent Health and Development	10	6%
Other ¹¹	37	25%

Around 47% of respondents listed the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa as the, or one of the, organisations that represented them in their role as a youth worker.

¹⁰ 2% did not record a response

¹¹ These represent 21 separate organisations that were named six or less times

The main reason cited for why the youth worker did not believe the organisation represented them was that they did not know enough about the organisation or were not aware of an organisation they felt represented them.

Around 47% of respondents listed the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa as the, or one of the, organisations that represented them in their role as a youth worker.

The main reason cited for why the youth worker did not believe the organisation represented them was that they did not know enough about the organisation or were not aware of an organisation they felt represented them.

7.0 Demographics

The demographic section was an option section in the questionnaire that some respondents chose not to answer. Of the 400 responses we received, 99% completed the demographic questions.

7.1 Gender

Respondents were more likely to be female than male, with 61% of responses coming in from female youth workers and 36% from male youth workers.¹² This is slightly higher than what was reported in *Real Work*, where 52% were female and 44% male.

7.2 Age

The most commonly reported age bracket was 25-34 years, with 33% of respondents citing this bracket. Twenty-four percent were aged 35-44 years, 18% were aged 18-24 years, 17% 45-54 years, 5% 55 years or older and 2% aged 18 years or younger.¹³

We used this age breakdown to be able to understand how many youth, as defined by the Ministry as 12-24 years are working in the youth work field. *Real Work* used slightly different age brackets and so it is not easily comparable.

7.3 Ethnicity

The table below shows the main ethnicity of respondents.

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
European/New Zealander	277	69
Maori	91	23
Pacific Island nation	12	3
Asian	2	0.5
Unknown	18	4.5

This is similar to *Real Work* which reported that 66% of respondents were Pakeha/European, 25% Maori, 10% Pacific nations and 1% Asian nations.

¹² 3% did not record a response

¹³ 3% did not record a response

7.4 Region

Respondents were more commonly from the main city centres around New Zealand, with higher percentages being recorded from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, however we did receive responses from Northland to Southland with a good spread of locations between. The table below lists the specific percentages recorded from each location.

Location	No.	%
Auckland	66	17.28
Bay of Plenty	28	7.33
Canterbury	51	13.35
Coromandel	3	0.79
East Coast	5	1.31
Hawkes Bay	13	3.40
Manawatu	26	6.80
Northland	26	6.81
Otago	28	7.33
Southland	16	4.19
Taranaki/Whanganui	4	1.05
Upper South	11	2.88
Waikato	20	5.24
Wairarapa	16	4.19
Wellington	60	15.71
West Coast	9	2.36

Appendix 1:

Questionnaire

Section One: Training:

The purpose of this section is to determine the specific training needs of youth workers.

1. *In your role as a youth worker, are you ...*

- Paid?
Unpaid?
A combination of paid and unpaid
– estimated percentage of time paid _____%

2. *Have you undertaken any professional youth worker¹⁴ training for your role as a youth worker?*

- Yes (previously) Go to Question 3
No Go to Question 7

3. *If you answered “yes” to Question 2, did you do your professional youth work training part time (20 hours or less a week) or full time?*

- Part time
Full time
Other, please detail

4. *Which organisation did you do your professional youth work training with?*

5. *What was the title of your youth work course or qualification?*

¹⁴ Note: we are referring to courses that provide or build to specific youth worker training, not short one off courses/seminars held on specific a subject matter.

6. Who paid for your professional youth work training?

- I paid for it myself (including Student Loan)
My employer
The DIA¹⁵ Youth Work Training Scheme
Other (please list below)
-

7. Are you currently undertaking any professional youth worker¹⁶ training for your role as a youth worker?

- Yes Go to Question 8
No Go to Question 12

8. If you answered “yes” to Question 7, are you currently undertaking professional youth work training part time (20 hours or less a week) or full time?

- Part time
Full time
Other, please detail
-

9. Which organisation or training institution(s) are you doing your professional youth work training with?

10. What is the title of your youth work course or qualification?

¹⁵ Department of Internal Affairs

¹⁶ Note: we are referring to courses that provide or build to specific youth worker training, not short one off courses/seminars held on specific a subject matter.

11. Who paid for or is paying for your professional youth work training?

- I paid for it myself (including Student Loan)
 - My employer
 - The DIA¹⁷ Youth Work Training Scheme
 - Other (please list below)
-

12. If you were to undertake (more) youth work training, how would you prefer to do your training?

- Full-time
- Part-time (20 hours or less a week)
- Block of training over short periods
- I would not undertake (more) training

13. Are there any specific subjects relevant to your work with young people that you would especially like to learn more about? eg safe and ethical practice, risk assessment, event management, sexuality issues, communication skills, self care, the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa etc ...

Please list as many as applicable

14. If training awards (the allocation of a set amount of funding to support people while undertaking training) were available to youth workers, would it motivate you to undertake further training (paid for by the award)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

¹⁷ Department of Internal Affairs

15. Do you currently receive some form of professional supervision (an opportunity to reflect on your youth work practice with a trained professional supervisor) as part of your youth work practice?

Yes

Go to Section Two

No

Go to Question 16

Usually, but not at the moment

Go to Question 17

16. If you answered “no” to Question 15 what are the specific reasons you do not receive professional supervision? eg no capacity in your organisation, not aware it existed, do not feel you need it ... list as many as are applicable.

_____ **Go to Section Two**

17. If you responded “usually, but not at the moment” to Question 15, what is/are the reasons you are not currently receiving professional supervision, and do you expect you will be able to receive professional supervision again at some point in the future? Please list as many reasons as applicable below.

_____ **Go to Section Two**

Section Two: Networks:

The Ministry is interested in the extent to which youth workers are involved in, and aware of, local and/or national youth worker networks and collectives. This information will help us understand the value youth workers place on, and uptake in, networks and collectives around the country.

18. Are you a member of any youth worker networks or collectives?

Yes

Go to Question 19

No

Go to Question 20

I don't know

Go to Question 20

19. If yes, what is the name/s of the networks or collectives that you belong to?

20. Have you heard of a national organisation that you believe represents the wider interest of the youth work sector?

- Yes
No

21. Do you believe it represents you in your role as a youth worker?

- Yes Go to Question 22
No Go to Question 23
Not Sure Go to Question 23

22. If yes, please provide the name of the organisation that you believe represents you and the wider youth work sector.

23. If you answered “no”, or “not sure” to Question 21, is there any specific reason you believe it does or might not represent you in your role as a youth worker?

Optional questions

If you choose to answer these questions, the information will help us ascertain any trends from respondents.

24. Are you...

- Male
Female

25. What is your age band?

- Under 18 years
18 – 24 years
25 – 34 years
35 – 44 years
45 – 54 years
55+ years

26. What is your ethnicity? (please list below)

27. What region are you located in?

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your answers will help the Ministry of Youth Development to progress the Youth Worker's Workforce Development Project.