Skills and Training Audit

Youth Work sector in Wales

Workforce Development Implementation Participation Group | ETS Cymru Wales

Youth Work Workforce Skills and Training Audit 2024

Foreword

We warmly welcome this report on the Skills and Training Audit of the Youth Work sector in Wales. It is the first audit undertaken since 2013 but is wider in scope as it includes voluntary organisations, a crucial part of moving towards a more integrated approach to workforce development to include all who undertake youth work in Wales.

The Skills and Training Audit forms part of a pilot exercise for development of the Youth Work workforce, and is the necessary foundation for training, qualifying and equipping Youth Workers to serve the young people of Wales more effectively. It stems from recommendations made by the interim Youth Work Board's report 'Time to Deliver' to deliver a sustainable model for Youth Work. The Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board is appointed to lead this work and is supported by the Cabinet Secretary for Education.

This report is the result of many hours of consultation, research, discussion, drafting and editing, and we, as the Chairs respectively of the Workforce Development Implementation Participation Group (WDIPG) and Education Training Standards Cymru Wales (ETS), wish to pay tribute to all those who have been involved, particularly Data Cymru who undertook the audit, Welsh Government for funding and critiquing it, members of the WDIPG, our partners across Youth Work in Wales, our Workforce Development Officer, Darryl White, for making it happen, and of course those who gave of their time, experience and expertise to complete the data collections.

Data from the Audit and summarised in this Report will be held by ETS and Data Cymru until 2026, providing the all-important evidence-base for moving forward, and enabling us to draw down further analysis as the need arises, for example of specific geographical and demographic data. We commend the Report to you and trust you will find both the data and analysis useful in ensuring the Youth Work Sector is well equipped for the future of Youth Work in Wales and in its mission to serve the young people of Wales

Jo Sims – Chair of the Youth Work Workforce Implementation Participation Group

Steve Drowley – Chair of Education Training Standards Cymru / Wales

Short Summary of findings

- The surveys were split into two. There were 501 responses from the individual survey and 49 responses from senior leaders on behalf of their organisations.
- The surveys had a good proportion of responses from across all of Wales, from both the voluntary sector and from local authorities.
- A large number of respondents require the full Youth Support Worker qualification to be able to register with the Education Workforce Council.
- Recruitment and retention continue to be an issue within the sector. The report below outlines the overall picture of Youth Work in Wales.
- Safeguarding has been highlighted as an area to be investigated, as although most are qualified, a significant proportion of respondents were either unconfident or very unconfident.
- Qualifications that support Youth Work delivery, that will enable practitioners to teach, assess and quality assure qualifications have been determined as a need.
- A range of professional learning topics have been identified as a training need and will feature in the training programme developed from the result.
- Youth Work delivered though the Welsh Language has been identified as an area to be addressed and supported to encourage practitioners to learn the language and be confident in using it.
- Organisations have reported that there are significant barriers to accessing training.

Methodology

In November 2023, Data Cymru was commissioned by Education Training Standards (ETS) Wales to undertake a renewed skills and training data collection. Both the Local Authorities and the Voluntary sectors were asked to take part. Two data collection instruments were developed; one aimed at individuals and one to be completed by a senior leader within organisations delivering youth work in Wales.

Given the increased scale and complexity of this audit compared to that of the audit in 2013, very little of the original collection's methodology or design was carried forward into the 2024 audit. Therefore, data is not comparable between the two collections.

Data Cymru worked closely with ETS to refine a specification, develop and test the collections, run the collections, and carry out analysis and reporting.

The bi-lingual data collections were developed and conducted using an online survey tool (SmartSurvey) and were distributed via publicly available links. ETS promoted the surveys through a variety of channels and methods, including:

- Email through the national Principal Youth Officers Group (PYOG) and the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS) members.
- The Youth Work Bulletin
- Social media
- The Youth Work Implementation Strategy Board and all the Implementation Participation Groups, which were asked to share within their networks.

The surveys ran for 6 weeks.

Survey overview

The surveys included mostly closed questions, but some open questions were also included. However, general themes or common words have been included where appropriate, but the frequency of the themes has not been included as the list of common themes is not intended to be exhaustive.

Like any data collection instrument, surveys have limitations, and it is important that these are considered when interpreting the data. Below we highlight some of the potential limitations that might be associated with these surveys:

- The sampling method relied heavily on online engagement and some individuals may not have access to the internet or be a member of CWVYS or on social media and therefore, some individuals may have been missed in the sample, which may have unknowingly skewed the results. This is called sampling bias.

- Since the surveys are optional, self-selection bias may also be present. Self-selection bias is the potential introduction of inaccuracies due to the opinions of those willing to answer differing from the opinions of those not willing to answer. A common side-effect of self-selection bias is the introduction of extreme results, i.e. those who have strong positive or negative opinions are more likely to want to submit their opinions.

- Surveys rely upon the respondent providing accurate information. Survey data should always be treated with care, as some information provided may be inaccurate or opinion rather than fact.

Organisational survey

92 responses were submitted to the organisational collection, comprised of 44 completed and 48 partial responses.

Of the 44 organisations which provided complete responses, four completed the collection more than once. Therefore, Data Cymru developed rules to combine these responses for dissemination purposes. These rules are shown below:

Multiple choice questions – All selected options were included as one response
Single choice questions (apart from Figure 48)

- Where a 'yes' response was provided, this was taken as the single response.
- Where a 'yes' response was not provided, 'no' was taken as the single response.
- Otherwise, 'Don't know' was taken as the single response.

- For The section below is framed around understanding the recruitment picture that organisations are faced with when recruiting suitable Youth Work staff, and the impact recruitment issues has had on organisations and their ability to work with young people.

Figure 48, this logic was reversed due to the way in which the question was worded.
Number responses– The maximum of all responses was included.

Open text – All text was combined as one response

Of the 48 organisations which provided partial responses, 39 were removed:

- One was removed because not enough information was provided and the organisation submitting the response was unknown (name not provided)
- 38 responses were removed because organisations provided a second, more complete response

After data cleaning, 49 organisational responses were used in the analysis, 40 complete and 9 partial responses.

Table 1: Number of respondents by response type

	Completed	Partial	Total
Before cleaning	44	48	**92**
Removed during cleaning	0	39	**39**
Removed due to combining	4	0	**4**

Total	**40**	**9**	**49**

Individual survey

501 responses were submitted to the individual collection, comprised of 426 completed and 75 partial responses.

No completed responses were removed during the data cleaning process.

For the individual's collection, only one criterion had to be met for a partial response to be kept. The respondent had to complete at least question 4 (*Are you registered with the Education Workforce Council (EWC)* - Figure 3). This question was chosen as it was determined to be the first question that provided information on the individual responding, rather than the organisation they work for. Seven responses did not meet this criterion and were removed.

After data cleaning, 494 individual responses were used in the analysis, 426 complete and 68 partial responses. This is summarised in table 2.

Table 2: Number of respondents by response type

	Completed	Partial	Total
Before cleaning	426	75	**501**
Removed during cleaning	0	7	**7**
Total	**426**	**68**	**494**

Youth Work analysis and interpretation

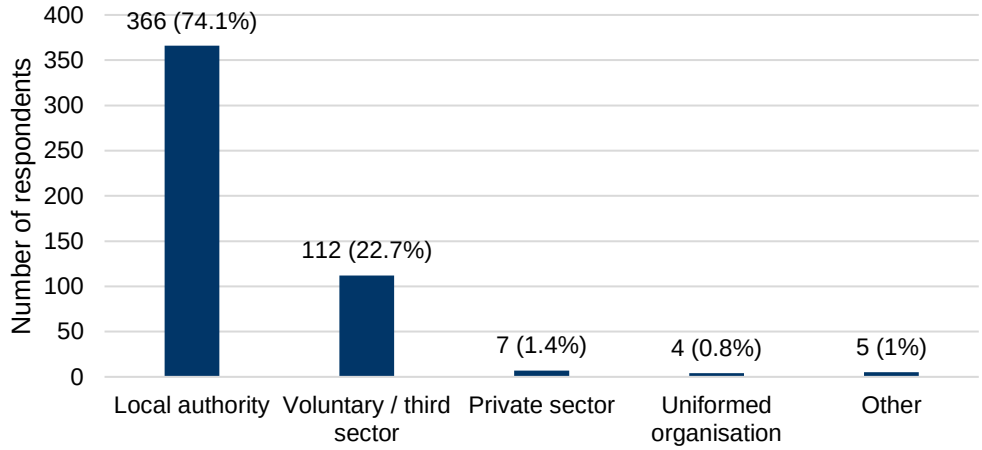
As stated above, the surveys conducted were split into two, to monitor the needs of the practitioner and the needs of the organisation, as it is widely recognised that the level of need can differ. As part of this survey report, a level of Youth Work based analysis will be interpreted and colloquially known as **Youth Work-ification**. This report utilises the statistics provided by Data Cymru shown on the charts and tables. Further analysis has been undertaken by Youth Work professionals supported by ETS.

Although this is a data collection exercise, this report will inform the design, delivery and implementation of the national training programme and professional learning for Youth Work practitioners, including Youth Work qualifications. This information helps us to understand the training needs that the sector has and helps us to identify what needs to be addressed to support workforce development.

Individual survey results

About you

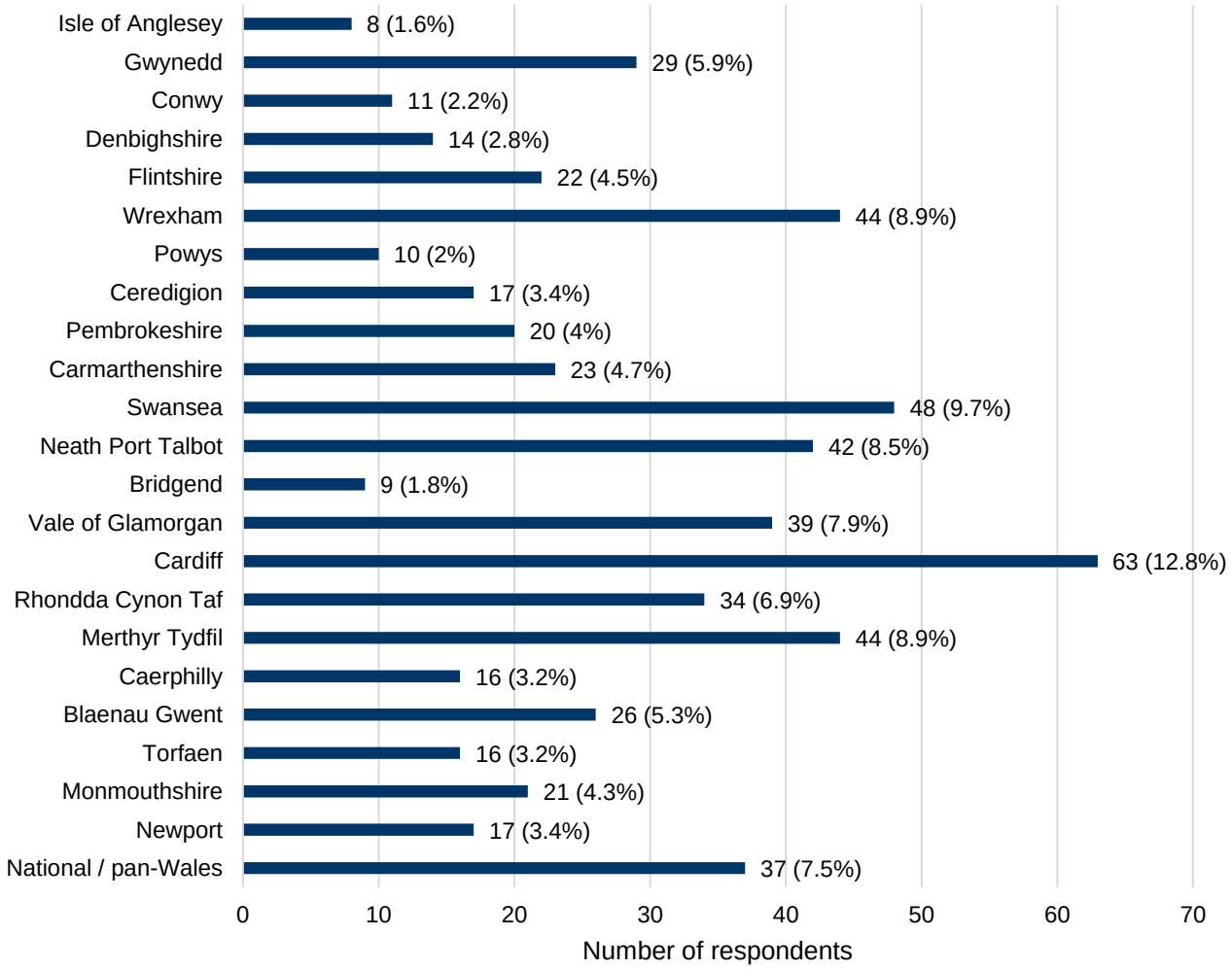
Figure 1: What sector is your organisation in?



Number of respondents: 494

'Other' responses include Youth Work and Education.

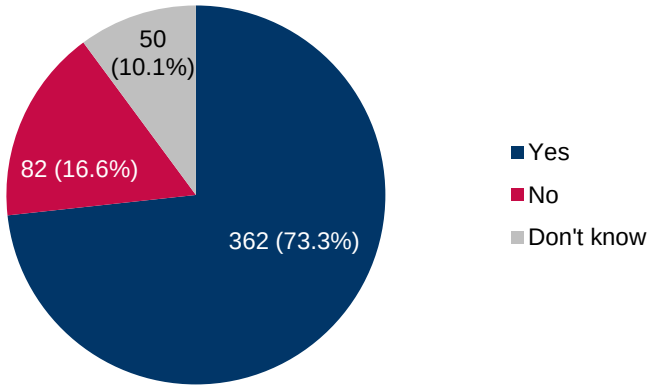
Figure 2: Within which local council area(s) does your organisation work?



Number of respondents: 494

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of respondents. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of respondents as the denominator.

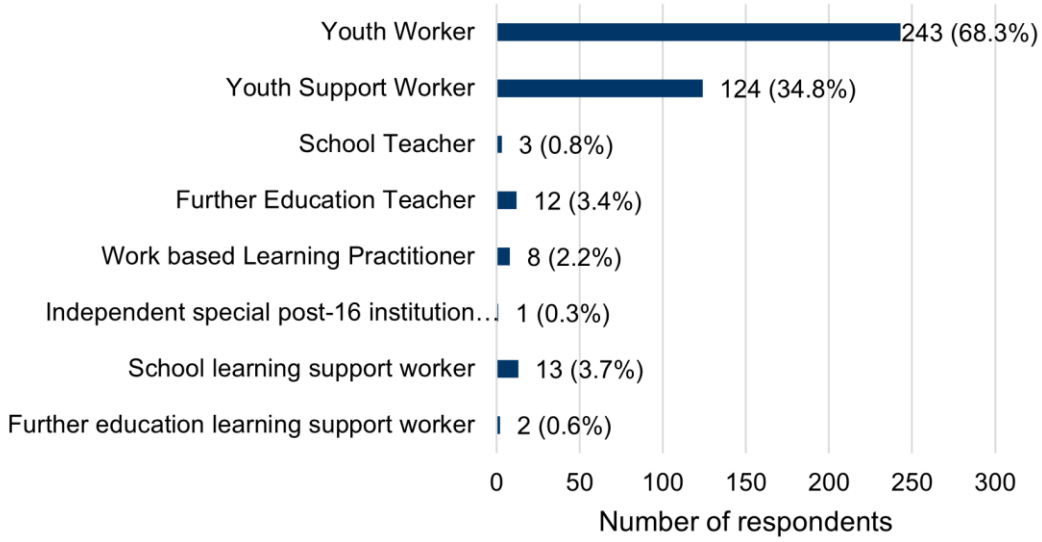
Figure 3: Are you registered with the Education Workforce Council (EWC)?



Number of respondents: 494

Those respondents who chose “Yes” were asked an additional question, shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: What is your registered role(s) with the Education Workforce Council?

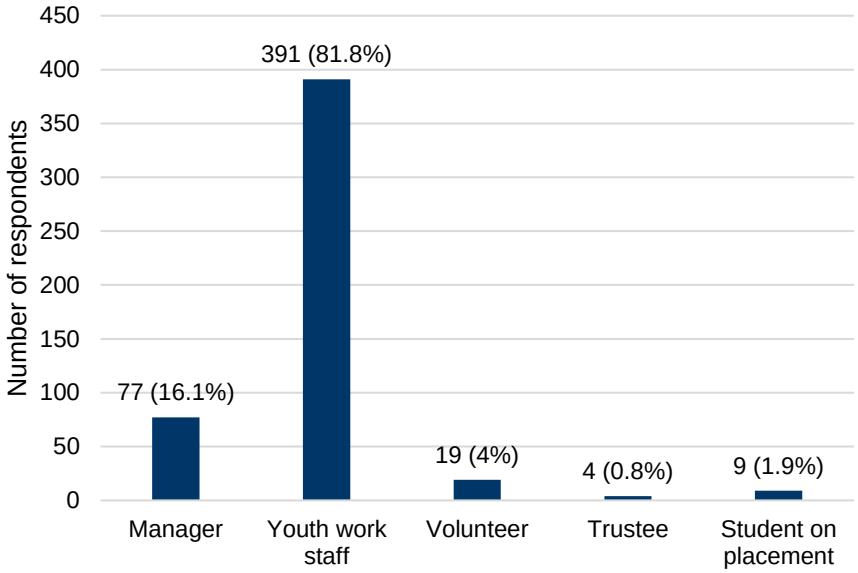


Number of respondents: 356

The data in figure 4 suggest that respondents mainly register as either a Youth Worker or Youth Support Worker, but some may have dual registration status. In Wales, paid and practising Youth Workers or Youth Support Workers who hold a JNC recognised qualification, or are in training, are legally required to register with the Education Workforce Council.

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of respondents. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of respondents as the denominator.

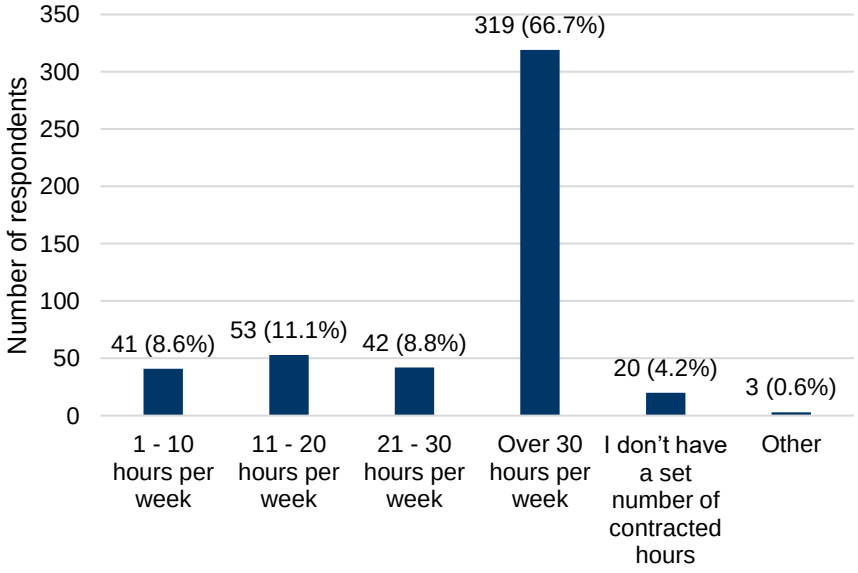
Figure 5: What is your role type?



Number of respondents: 478

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, column totals may not sum to the total number of respondents. Percentages have been calculated using the column total as the numerator and the number of respondents as the denominator.

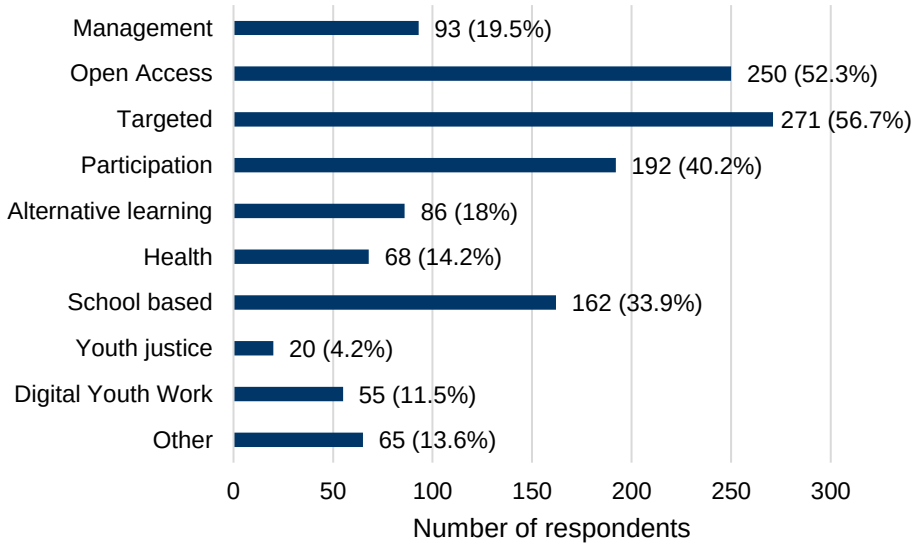
Figure 6: What are your contracted working hours?



Number of respondents: 478

'Other' responses include "Volunteer" and "Self-employed".

Figure 7: What type of Youth Work do you provide?



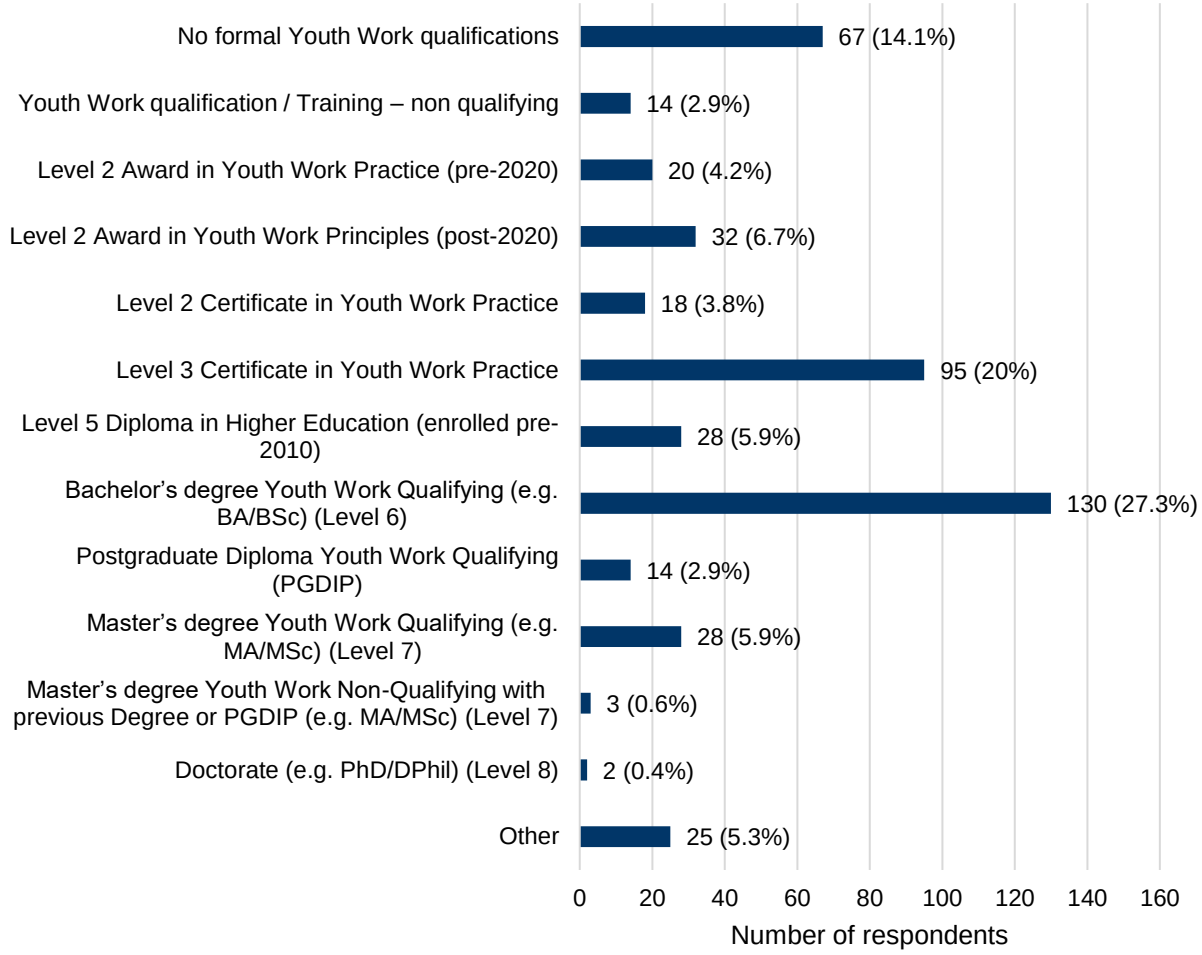
Number of respondents: 478

Other responses include Homelessness support, youth clubs / school holidays clubs / sports clubs and 16+ support.

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of respondents. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of respondents as the denominator.

Level of Youth Work qualifications / training

Figure 8: Select the highest youth work professional qualification you have.



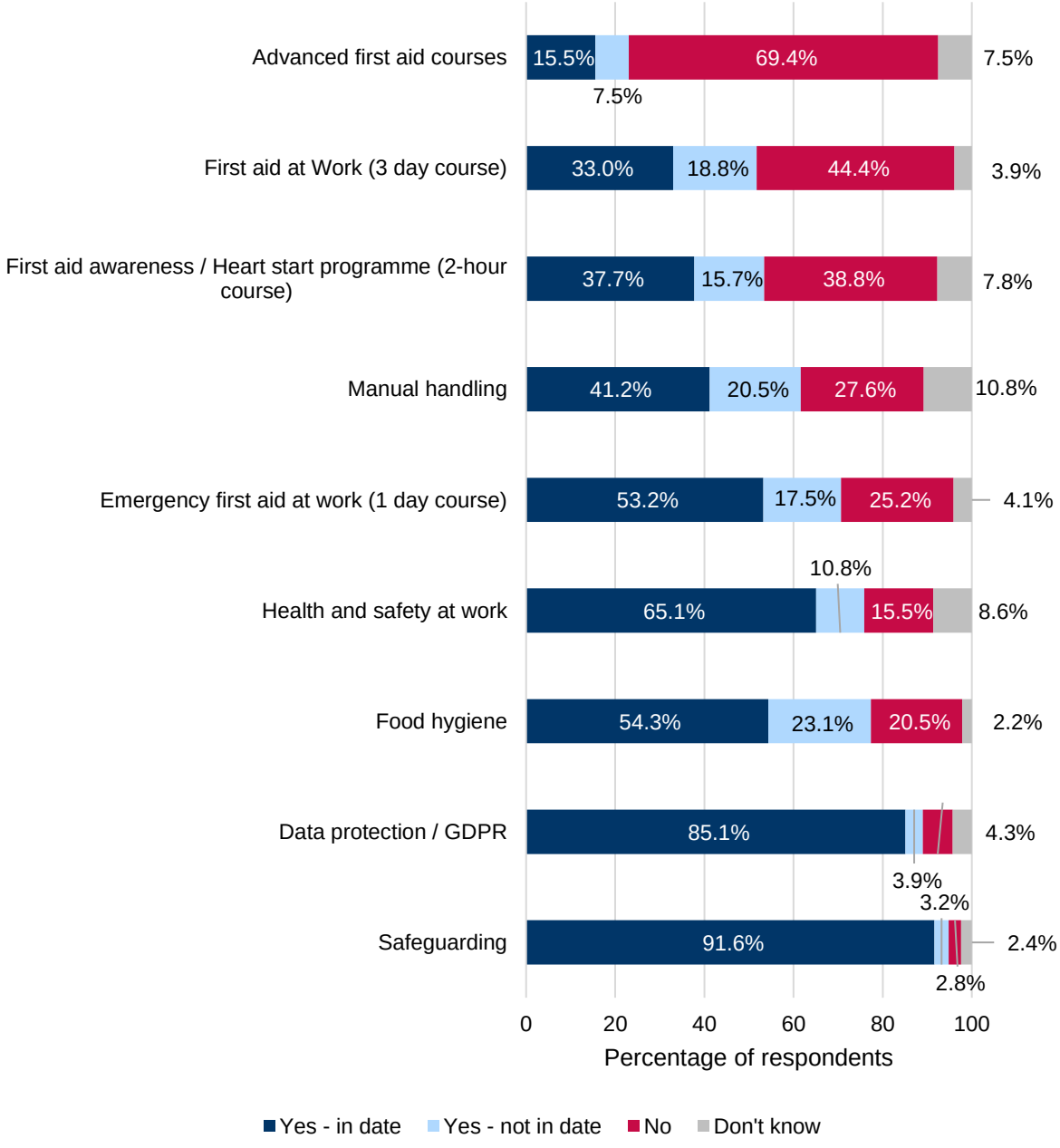
Number of respondents: 476

'Other' responses include Level 2 (Unknown), Level 2 (Youth work) current and Level 7 (PGCE).

The data above in figure 8 would suggest that additional resource is needed to support more practitioners to achieve the minimum requirement of Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work Practice by May 2025, thereby meeting the end of the grace period/registration deadline for Youth Support Workers. As part of the national training programme, support to bridge the qualification gap by May 2025, using techniques that are accessible to learners will be factored in.

Figure 9: Have you ever received training in the following areas?

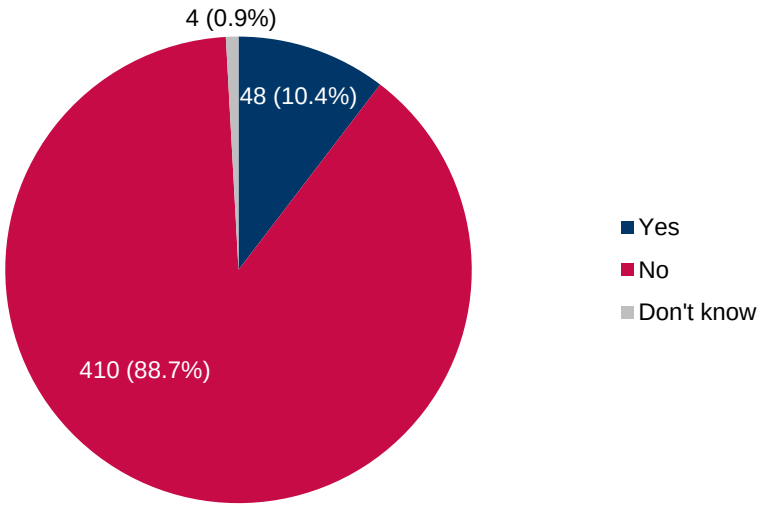
The data below in figure 9 are framed around training that is regarded as basic safety training, which will enable practitioners to operate safely.



Number of respondents: 464

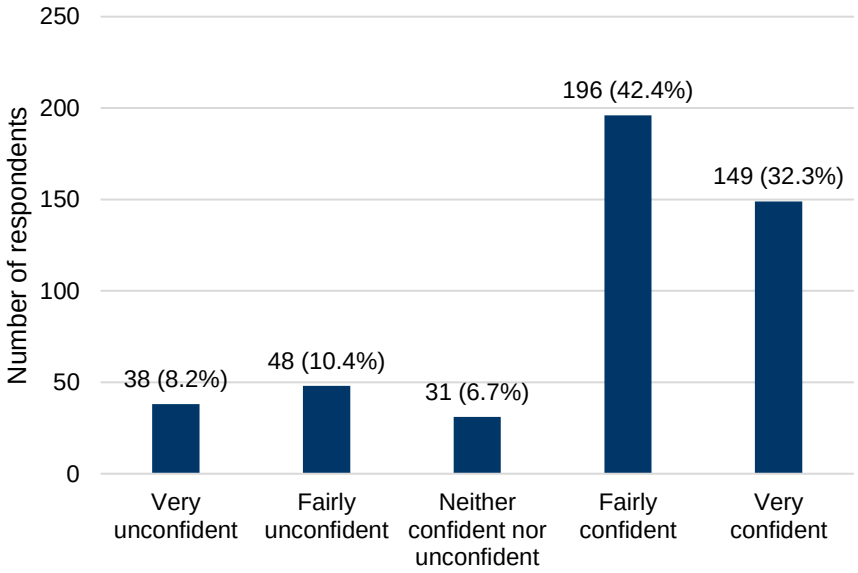
Whilst it is encouraging that nearly 92% of respondents have received formal training in safeguarding, considering the raw data further suggest the majority of those who are not trained are from the voluntary sector. Furthermore, figure 9 indicates that first aid is an area to develop for practitioners who require it for their role, although funding may not need to be allocated to this as signposting to existing opportunities may be more effective/efficient in getting the workforce qualified.

Figure 10: Are you the designated Safeguarding Lead / Officer?



Number of respondents: 462

Figure 11: How confident are you in dealing with safeguarding issues?

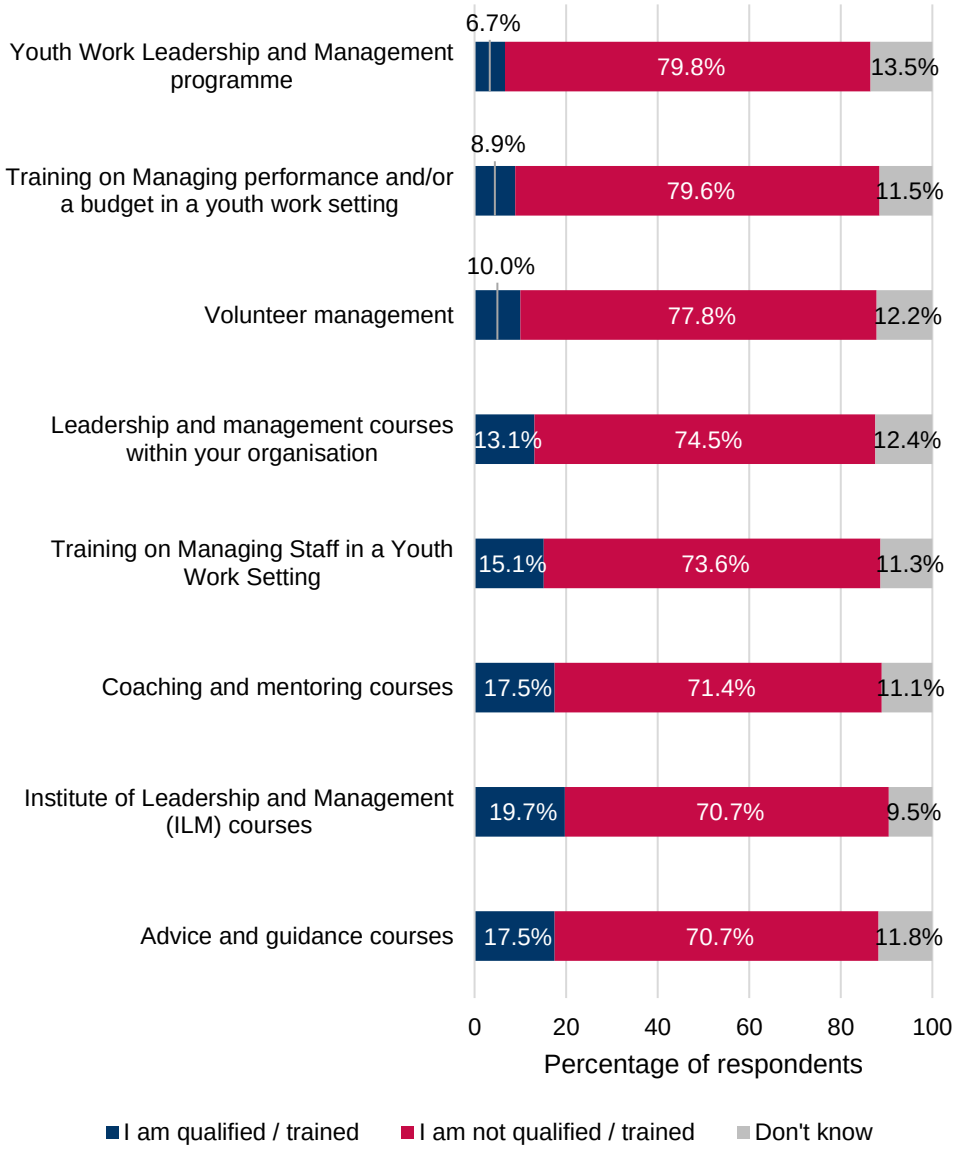


Number of respondents: 462

The figure above shows that many respondents were confident in dealing with safeguarding concerns, although still a significant proportion of respondents lack confidence. This is despite many respondents being qualified or having received formal training in safeguarding. This would suggest safeguarding training that is being delivered is either too general and not specific enough for the Youth Work setting, or participants have not had to respond to a safeguarding concern or incident. Therefore, a consideration for contextualised Safeguarding training for Youth Workers and Youth Support Workers should be developed, using specific examples and case studies from Youth Work provisions, which will complement free training that is already in circulation.

Figure 12: Which of the following leadership and management training are part of your role?

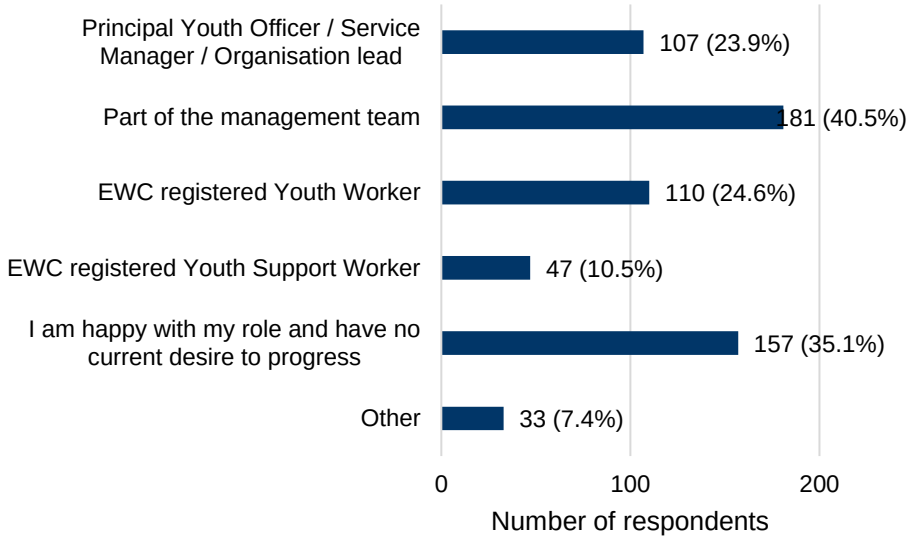
Leadership and Management within the Youth Work sector is key to ensure that the running of Youth Work organisations remains effective in supporting young people. The chart below indicates clearly that over 70% of respondents have not received Leadership and Management training. Within Wales, a level 7 in Leadership and Management is on offer to professionals, although a progression route of training for leadership at all levels is required.



Number of respondents: 451

Building on the pilot work undertaken, leadership and management training will be considered as part of the training programme, to cater for leaders who are currently in post as a manager or aspiring to take a more strategic lead. In addition, training should cater for operational leadership, such as managing small teams of staff in a youth provision.

Figure 13: Thinking about your career progression, do you aspire to progress and become any of the following roles?



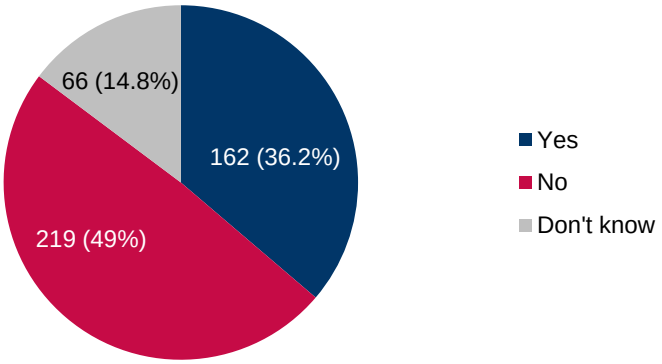
Number of respondents: 447

'Other' responses included those who did not know whether they wanted to progress, roles in consultancy, policy-related roles, setting up a business, becoming a full-time worker, roles outside youth work, and retiring soon.

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of respondents. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of respondents as the denominator.

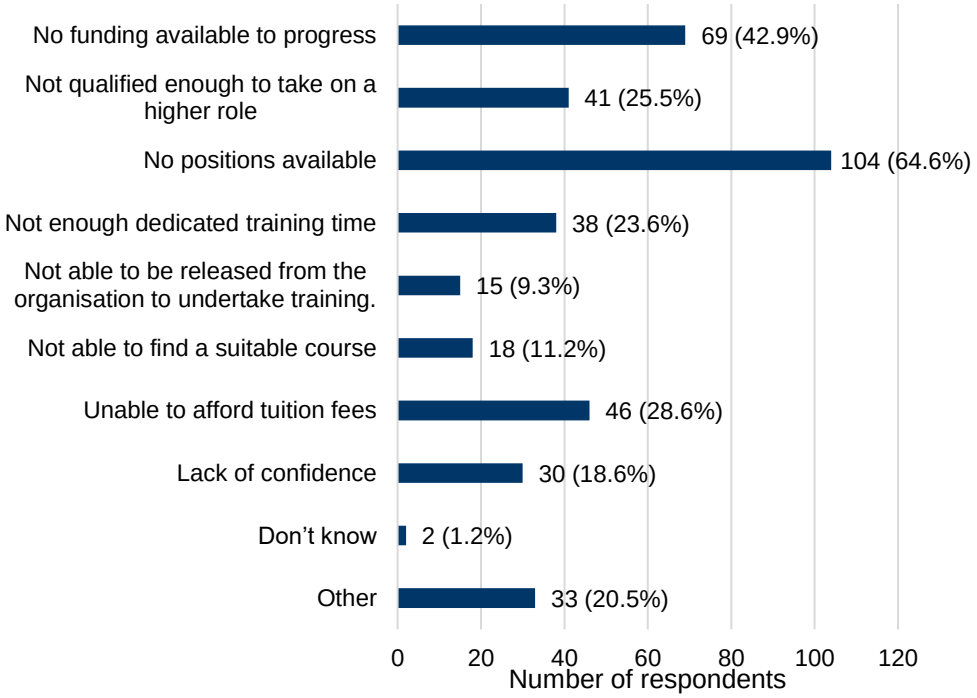
The data above relates to the outcomes of the leadership and management figures above (figure 12). More than half of respondents aspire to progress within their organisation but over 70% indicated they have not been trained in leadership and management. Whilst it is encouraging that nearly half of respondents are happy within their role, this survey also indicates that more than half are not. The figure above, backs up the previous figure and the recommendation of developing further leadership and management training in Wales.

Figure 14: Are there any barriers for you to progress in your career?



Number of respondents: 447

Figure 15: What are the barriers preventing you to progress in your career?



Number of respondents: 161

'Other' responses included family commitments, pregnancy/sickness, distance, mental health, learning difficulties, Welsh language skills. and discrimination.

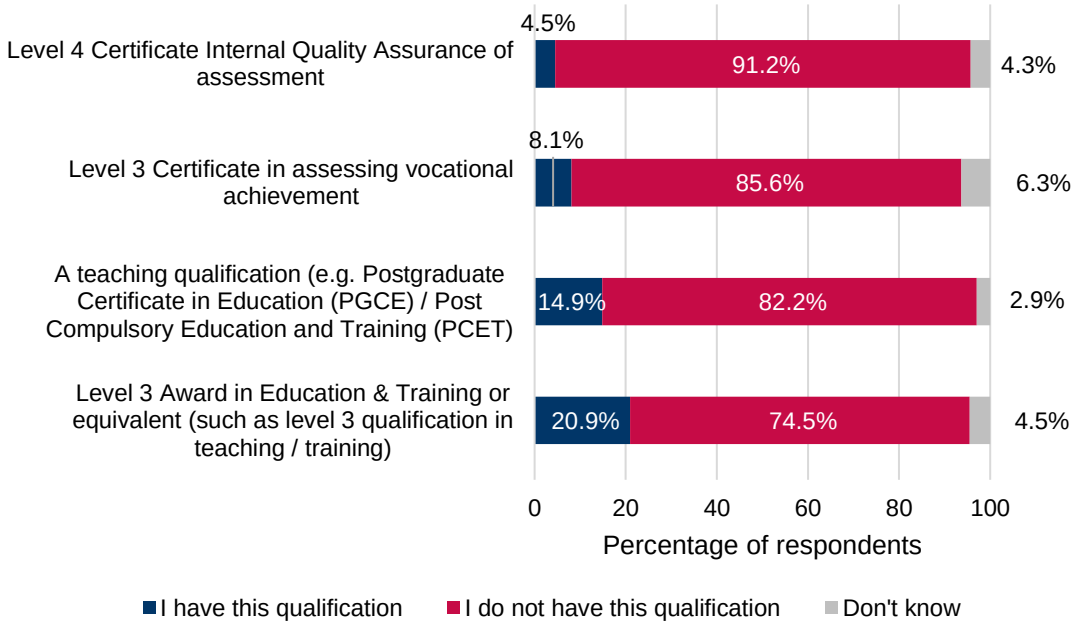
Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of respondents. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of respondents as the denominator.

The previous two charts (figs 14 &15) show 51% indicated that there was either a barrier to progression or they didn't know what that may be. Figure 15 further identified that lack of funding for training and progression, along with there being few opportunities for progression (64.6%) were the biggest challenges. 23% identified that there was a lack of time to undertake training, and this will be considered further as the training plan is developed to ensure training is available in a variety of ways including digitally to help support engagement.

Qualifications that support the delivery of Youth Work

Figure 16: Thinking about your qualification and training in the following areas, please select which statement applies to you

Figure 16 refers to qualifications that aren't specific to Youth Work but supports its delivery when working with young people and/or with developing practitioners.



Number of respondents: 444

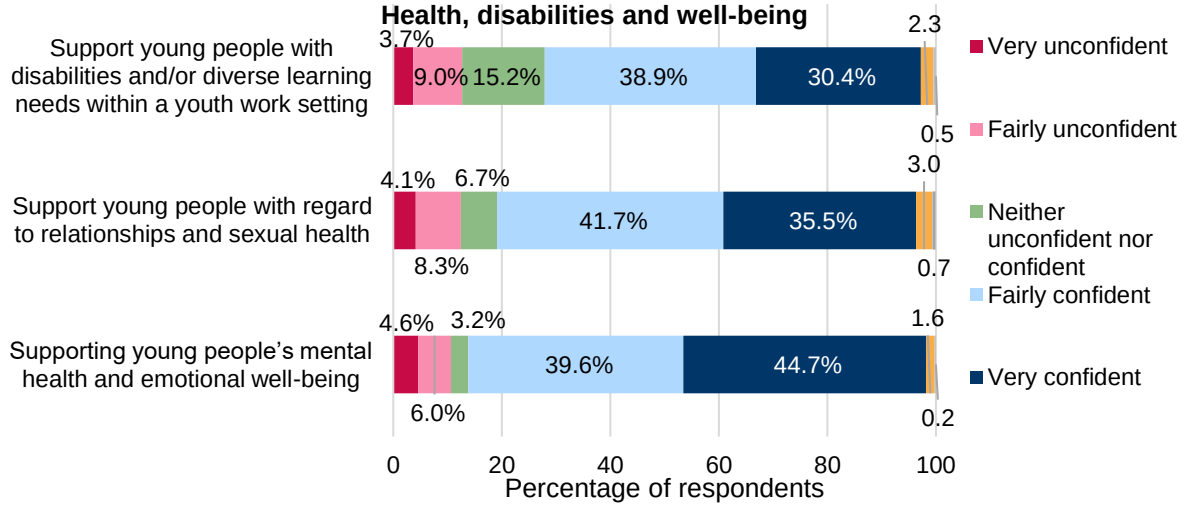
The chart above highlights the need for more infrastructure around the whole delivery of vocational qualifications, whether that be to young people or youth work staff. The data suggest that there is a significant deficit in practitioners having the necessary qualifications to be able to offer fully accredited courses. Figure 7 indicates that this applies to many practitioners working in schools or offering alternative education for young people also. Therefore, it is recommended that a concerted effort is made to ensure that the qualifications above are scaled up within the sector, so practitioners will be able to effectively teach / tutor, assess and internally quality assure (IQA) qualifications. Additionally, later in the report, figure 43 also identifies an organisational need for qualifications that support the delivery of vocational credit-based qualifications, which would, for example, support the delivery of Youth Work qualifications, particularly the Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work Practice.

There are many barriers to training and professional learning, as outlined below therefore having additional qualified assessors and IQAs will enable training and assessment to go beyond the traditional methods of written workbooks and will be able to be more accessible and flexible, with a greater number of trainers who can assess, and quality assure qualifications.

Professional learning

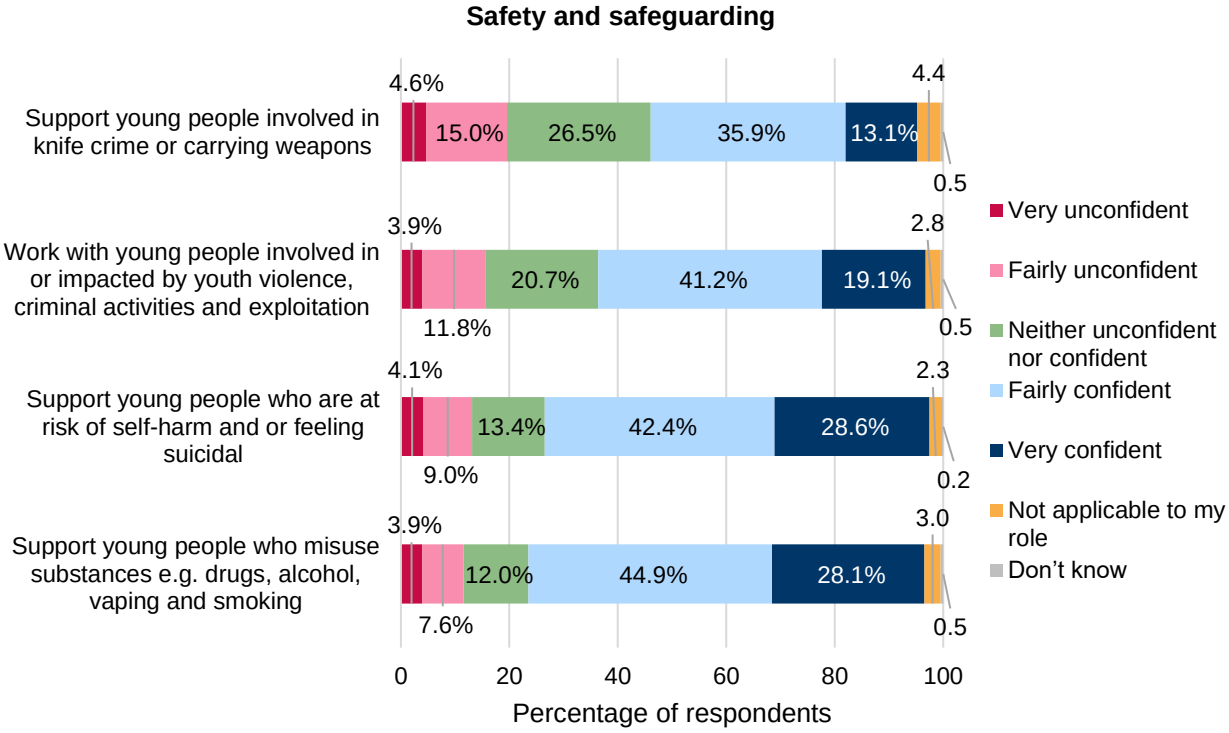
The following figures from 17 – 21 are framed around professional learning on themes which affect young people across Wales. Respondents were asked to select their confidence in each subject area, which was designed to inform the need for training. Additionally, all topics below are optional units on the Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work Practice and can count towards the certificate and offer professional learning.

Figure 17: Thinking about your role and how it relates to the following areas, please select the option that best describes your confidence level.



Number of respondents: 434

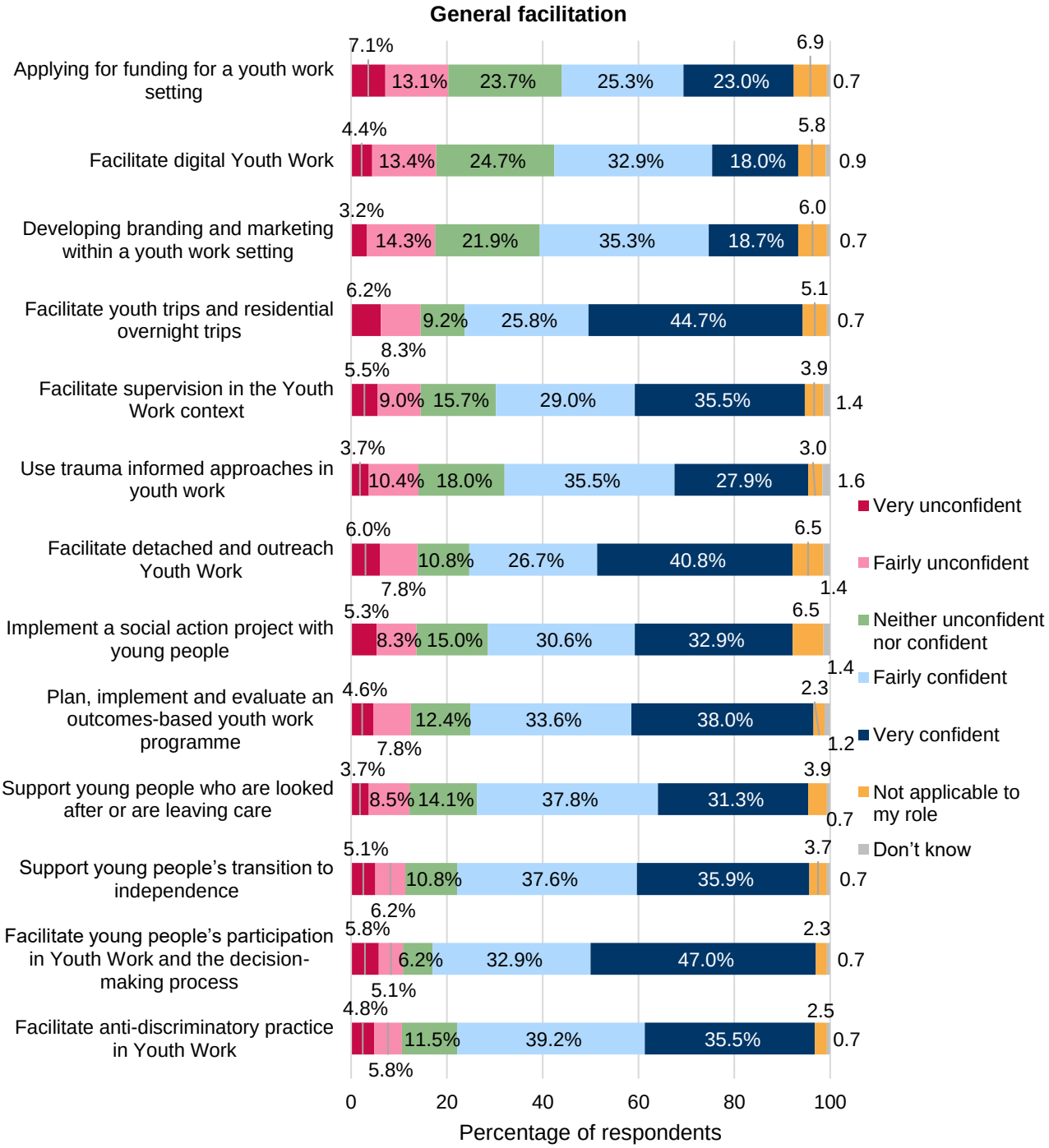
Figure 18: Thinking about your role and how it relates to the following areas, please select the option that best describes your confidence level.



Number of respondents: 434

Figure 18 highlights an important and valuable point, that some Youth Work settings may need to gain a greater understanding of the needs of young people within their communities, especially as issues like knife crime and exploitation have increased nationally but can be more common in certain areas. Therefore, a consideration should be given to prioritising training around these issues, especially ensuring training is suited to a Youth Work response when dealing with these issues.

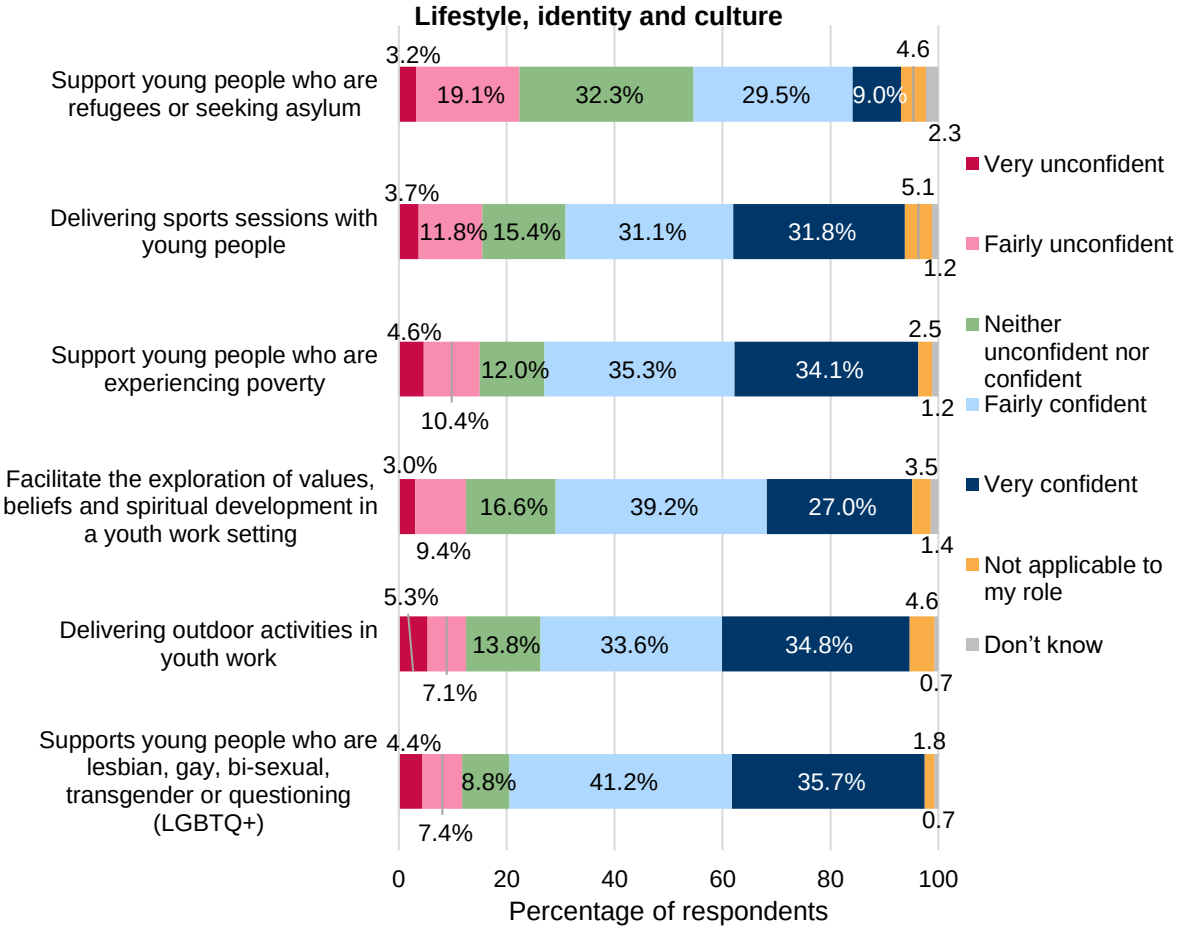
Figure 19: Thinking about your role and how it relates to the following areas, please select the option that best describes your confidence level.



Number of respondents: 434

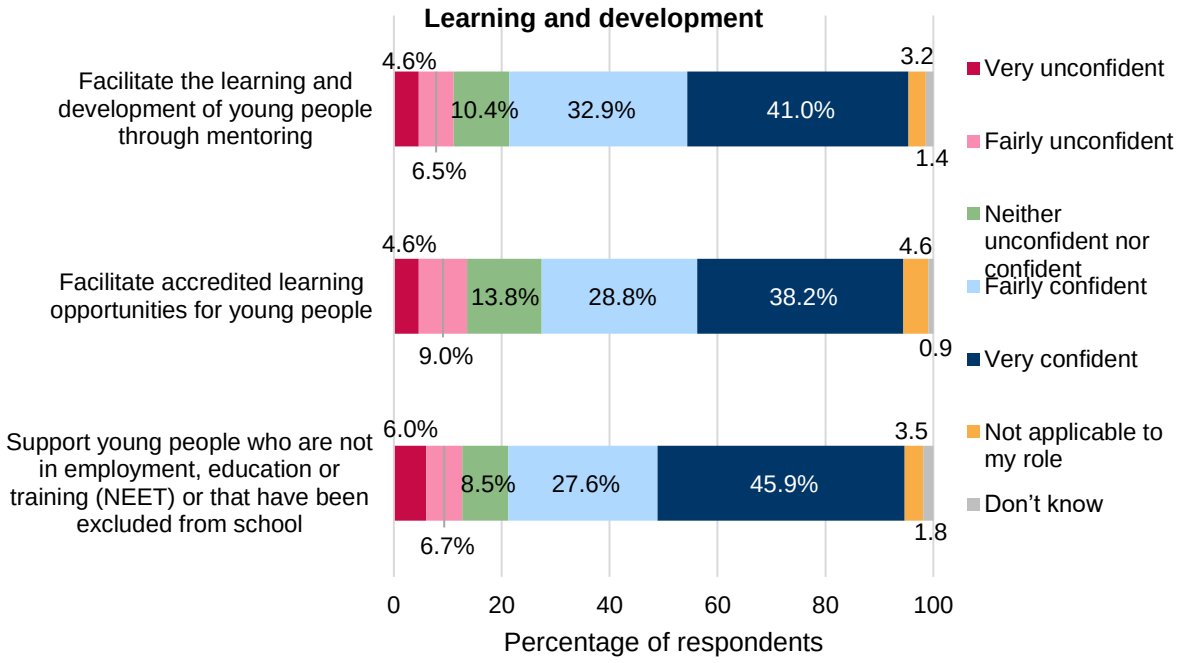
Figure 20: Thinking about your role and how it relates to the following areas, please select the option that best describes your confidence level.

The chart below shows that supporting young people who are refugees or seeking asylum is the highest self-declared professional learning need as 22.3% of respondents felt that they were either very unconfident or fairly unconfident.



Number of respondents: 434

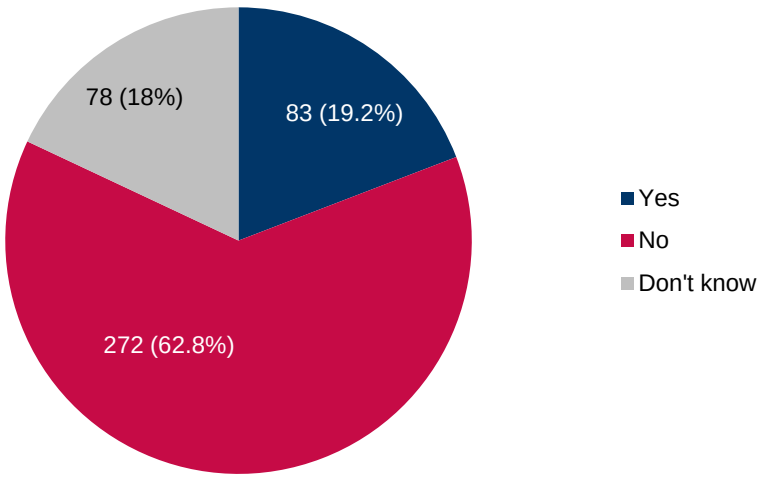
Figure 21: Thinking about your role and how it relates to the following areas, please select the option that best describes your confidence level.



Number of respondents: 434

Based on the outcomes above, the main subjects where respondents felt unconfident or indifferent are identified in figures 18 and 20. To prioritise training effectively, the training sub-group of the Workforce Development IPG have agreed that, if 15% of the respondents identify as either very unconfident or fairly unconfident, this will be considered as a training need and implemented as part of the National Training Programme.

Figure 22: Do you feel there are any other training needs you have as a Youth Work practitioner that have not been covered in this survey?



Number of respondents: 433

Those respondents who chose "Yes" were asked an additional question, shown in open text below.

Open text - Please specify what other training you require as a Youth Work practitioner below.

Several respondents to this question stated that they require safeguarding training in some form, particularly with regards to abuse, exploitation and drug abuse. Several also stated a requirement for training in supporting specific groups of young people such as LGBTQ+ people, asylum seekers and refugees, people with disabilities and neurodiverse young people. Other emerging topics included a desire for digital training, both to better understand how young people use the internet and to develop creative resources, and training in instructing outdoor activities for youths to take part in such as mountain biking and the Duke of Edinburgh's award. Also mentioned were management and counselling training, official youth work qualifications, first aid training including emergency and mental health first aid, and more general training allowing for progression.

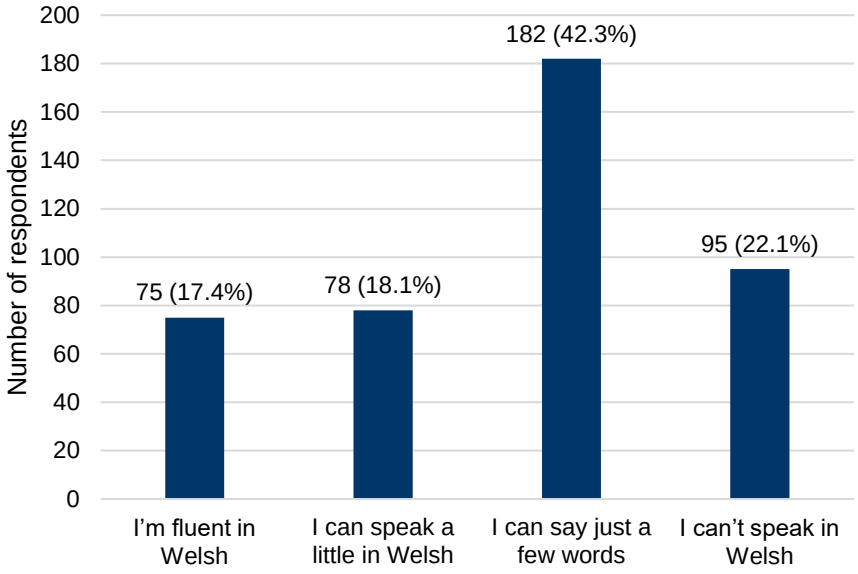
Number of respondents: 81

The open text responses above indicate that a consideration should be made to support the sector in abuse (highlighted above in particular with exploitation), substance misuse, supporting young people who are LGBTQ+ and supporting young people with disabilities and neurodiverse as part of the professional learning offer. Additionally, digital Youth Work has been highlighted as an area of priority, which is referred to in the open text above.

Welsh language

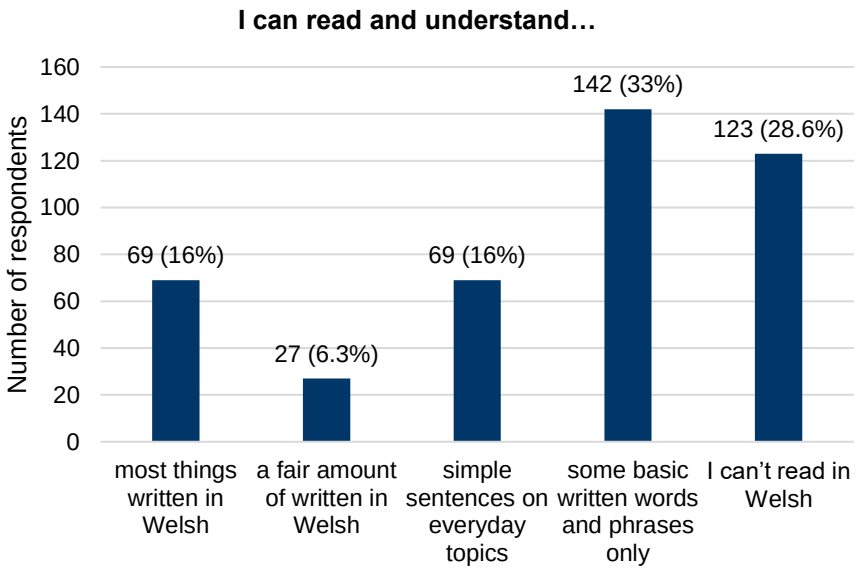
Welsh Government have a commitment to having 1 million Welsh Language speakers by 2050 (Cymraeg 2050), as a result Youth Workers will have a role to play in supporting the Welsh Government to achieve this.

Figure 23: Which of the following best describes your ability in speaking Welsh?



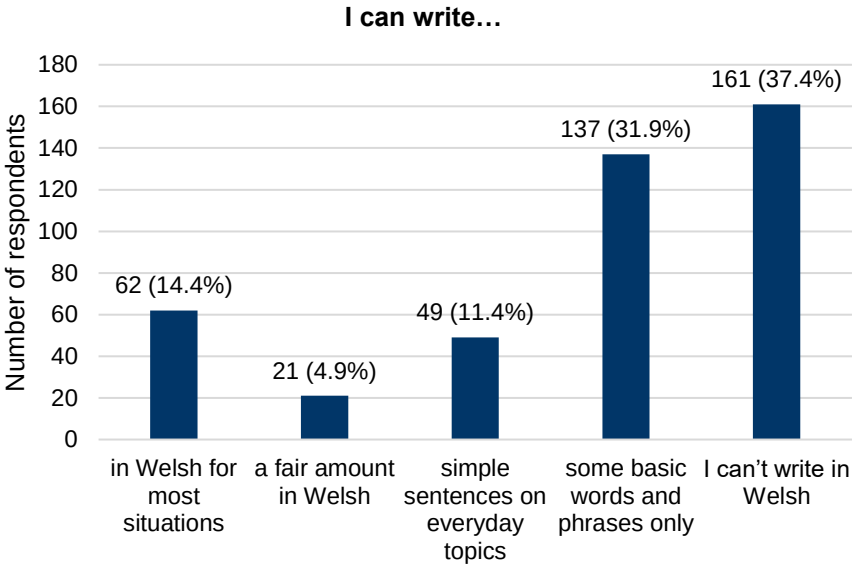
Number of respondents: 430

Figure 24: Which of the following best describes your ability to read and understand in Welsh?



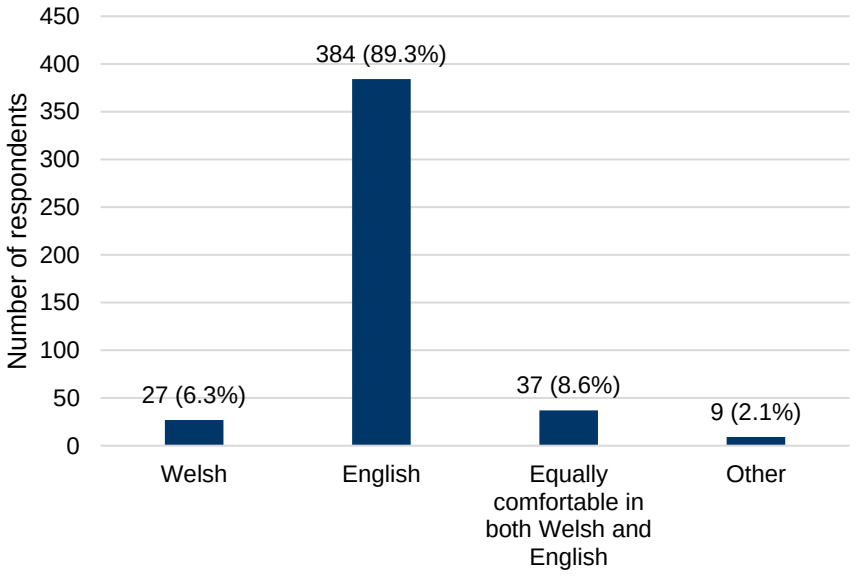
Number of respondents: 430

Figure 25: Which of the following best describes your ability to write in Welsh?



Number of respondents: 430

Figure 26: Which language(s) do you feel most comfortable using?

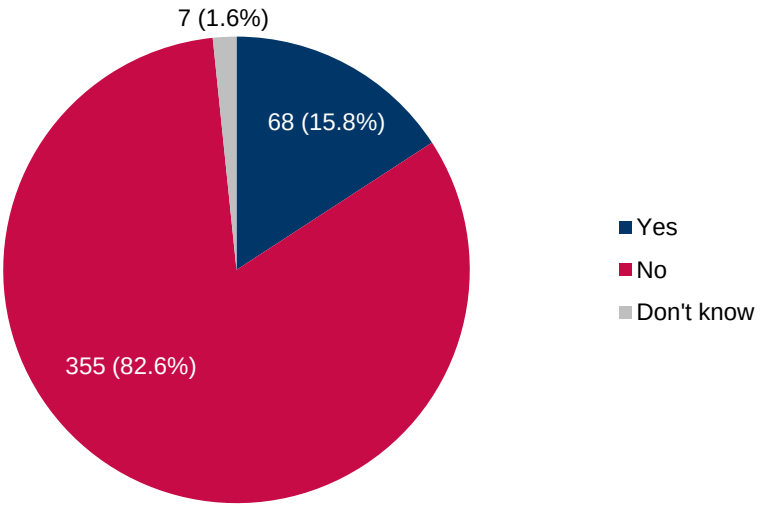


Number of respondents: 430

'Other' responses include Polish, French, Chinese and Hungarian.

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, column totals may not sum to the total number of respondents. Percentages have been calculated using the column total as the numerator and the number of respondents as the denominator.

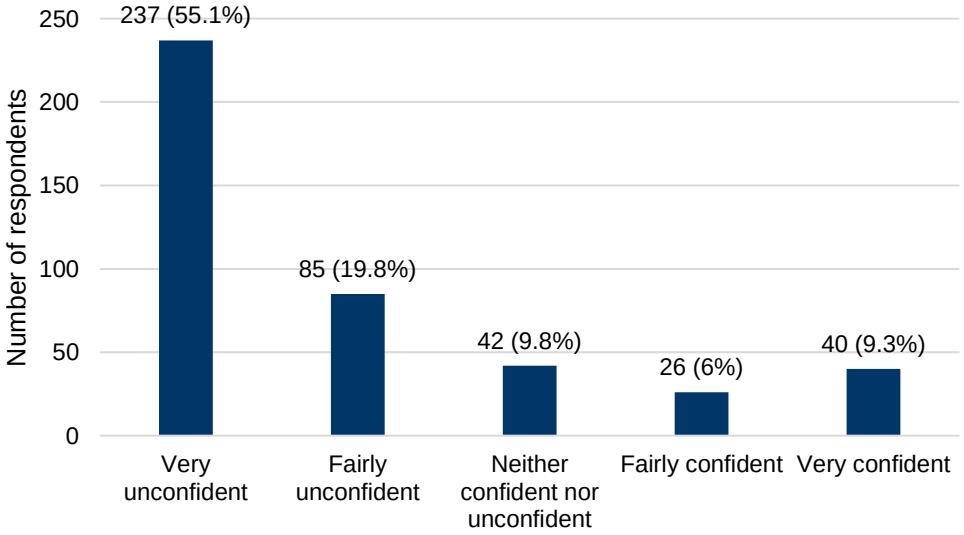
Figure 27: Do you deliver Youth Work through the medium of Welsh?



Number of respondents: 430

The information above relating to Welsh Language and bi-lingual delivery of Youth Work highlights that there are relatively low numbers of Youth Workers, who consider themselves as fluent Welsh speakers. Further work should be considered around Welsh Language Youth Work and should feature in the Workforce Development plan for the sector and additionally sign posting Youth Workers to learn Welsh, using existing free methods, such as Dysgu Cymraeg and encouraging Youth Workers who have limited abilities in speaking Welsh to 'give it a go'

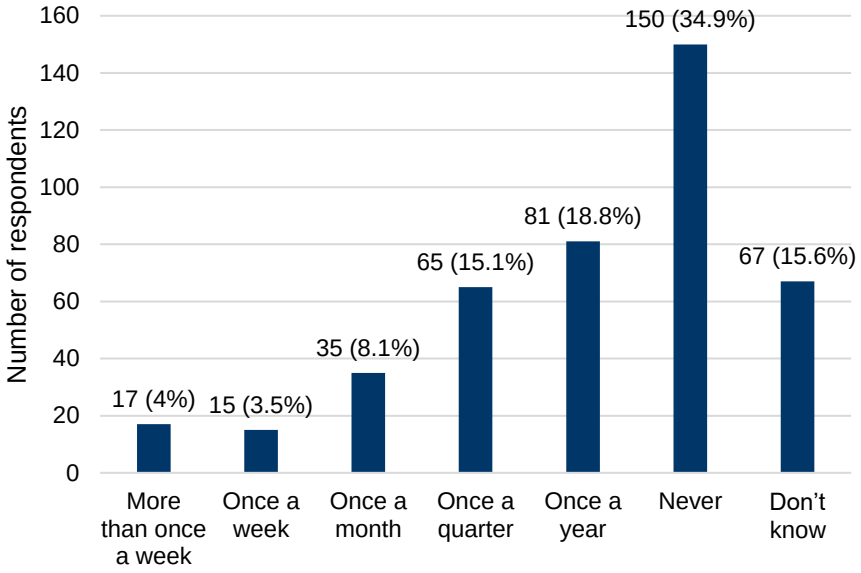
Figure 28: How confident do you feel facilitating activities and Youth Work provision in Welsh?



Number of respondents: 430

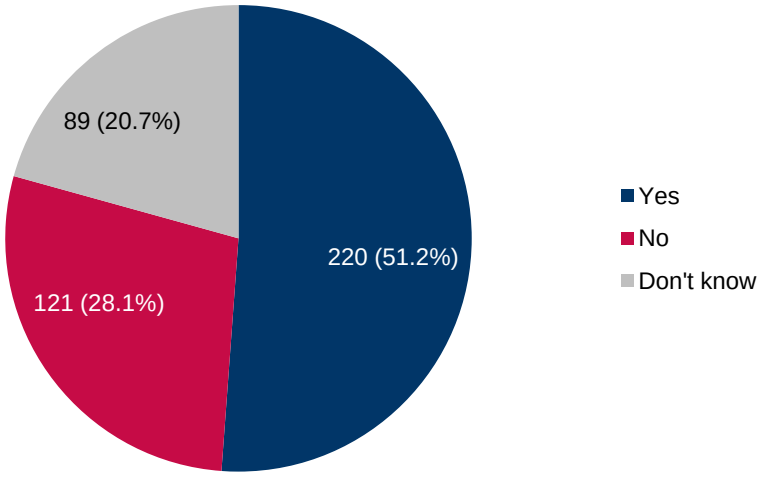
Figure 28 indicates there is a need for further support to enable practitioners to gain confidence when using the Welsh Language, with almost 70% of respondents saying they did not feel confident facilitating activities in Welsh, and 14 % saying they prefer to speak in Welsh or a mix of English and Welsh.

Figure 29: On average, how often do you deliver Youth Work sessions about Wales e.g. Welsh language, Welsh culture and history with young people?



Number of respondents: 430

Figure 30: Would further support enable you to facilitate activities and Youth Work provision in Welsh?



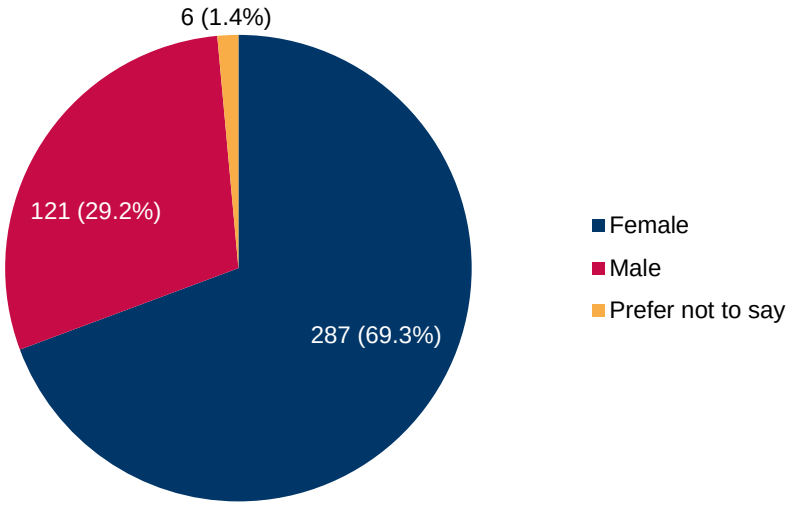
Number of respondents: 430

Figure 30 also highlights the need for additional support to enable practitioners to gain confidence using the Welsh Language and apply it when working within young people. Even though there are low levels of Welsh language speakers, and those confident to deliver in Welsh, over 50% indicated that support with this work would make a difference in terms of them facilitating activities in Welsh. It is therefore recommended that additional support is given to practitioners to be able to 'have a go' at using Welsh Language in a non-judgemental environment, with others who are learning or can speak Welsh but do not use it often.

Equality and Diversity monitoring

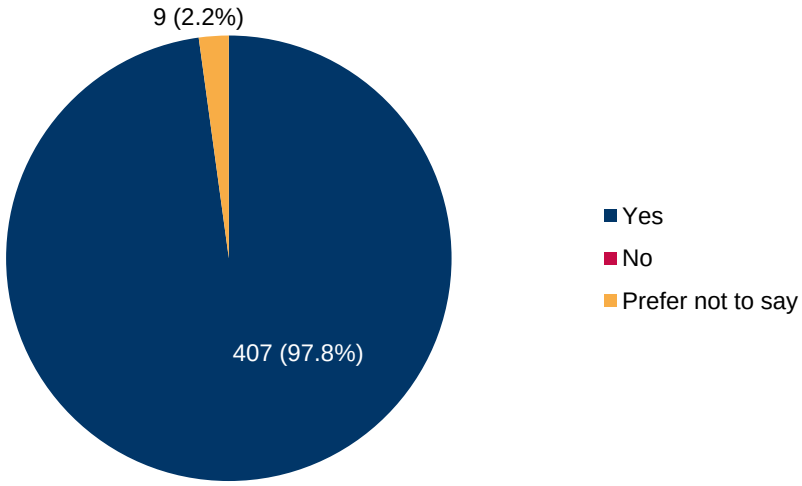
The data below paint the demographic picture of the workforce and whether this is representative of the demographic of young people who take part in Youth Work provision in Wales. Further analysis should be conducted to understand the proportionality and ratio in terms of ethnicity, race, sex and gender of Youth Workers and young people and how it compares to the communities they are based in.

Figure 31: What is your sex?



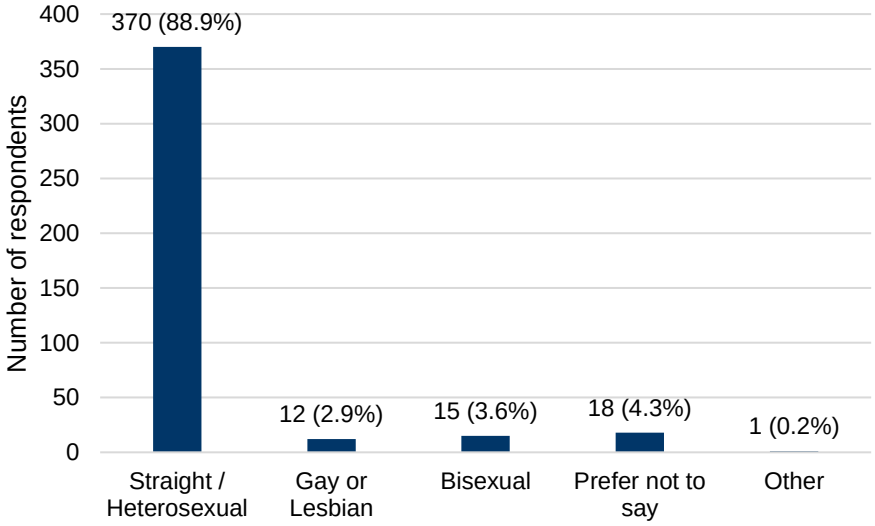
Number of respondents: 414

Figure 32: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?



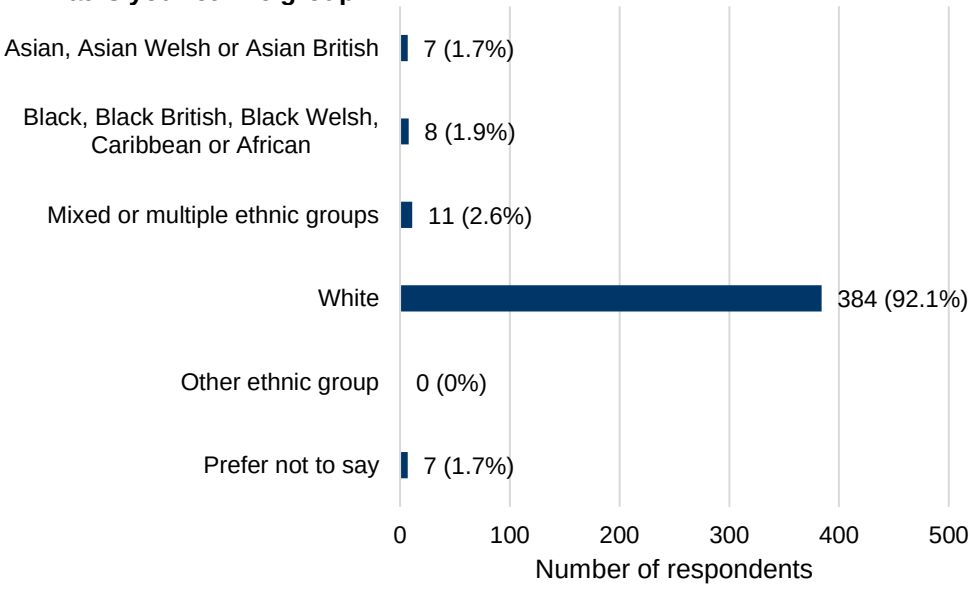
Number of respondents: 416

Figure 33: Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?



Number of respondents: 416

Figure 34: What is your ethnic group?



Number of respondents: 417

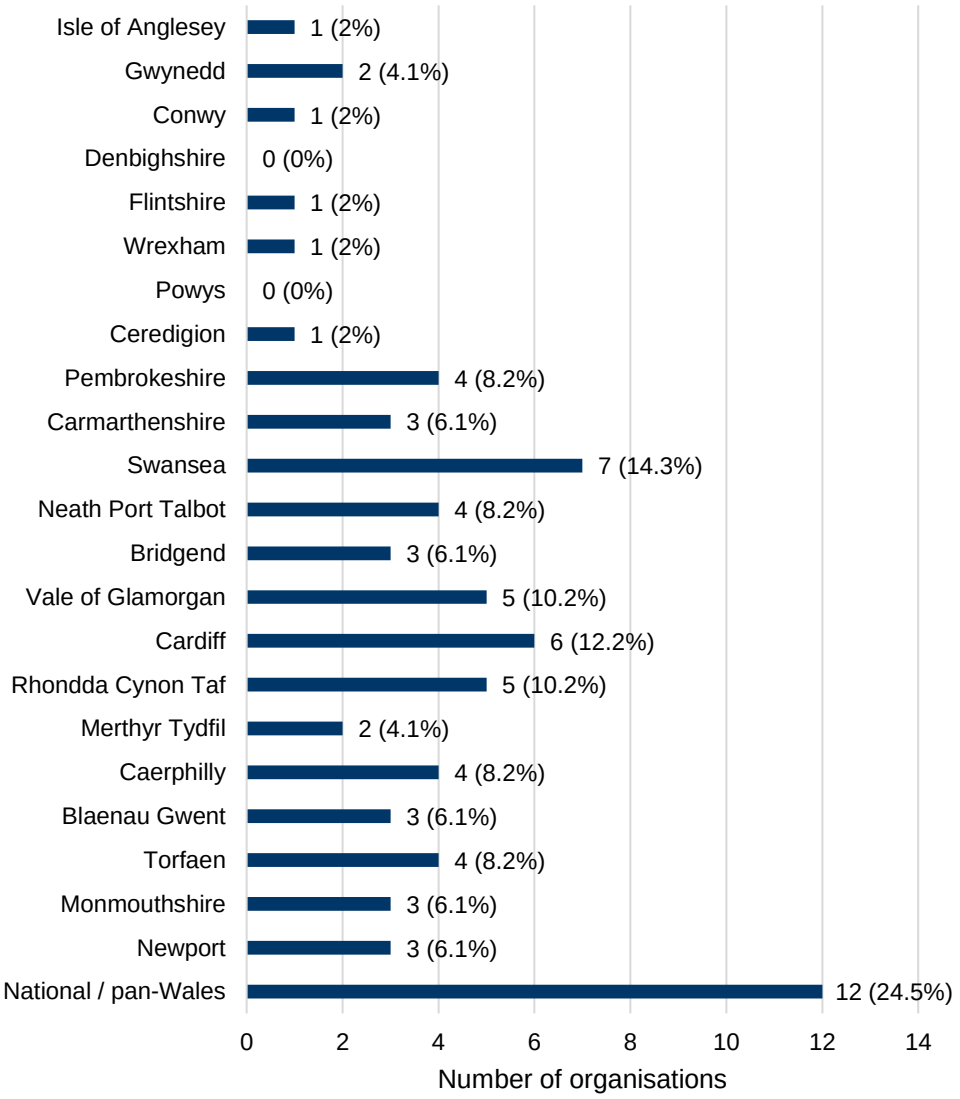
Further work should be conducted to recruit more Youth Workers from different ethnic groups to ensure that this reflects the ethnic demographic of young people who are involved in Youth Work activities.

Organisations

During this phase of the survey, 20 out of the 22 local authority-based Youth Services completed the survey on behalf of their organisation, and 24 voluntary based Youth Organisations completed the survey on behalf of their organisation, which is designed to understand the differences between individual practitioner needs and the organisational need.

About you

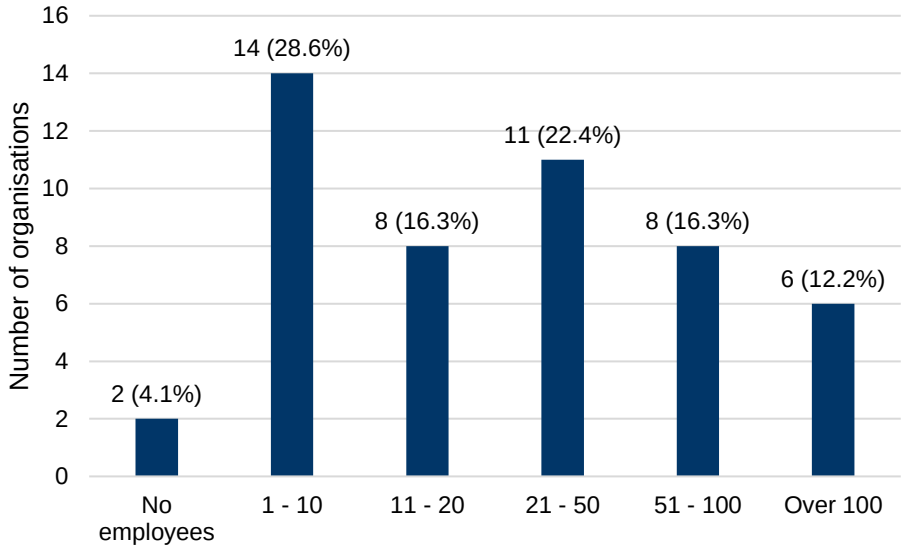
Figure 35: Within which local council area(s) does your organisation work?



Number of organisations: 49

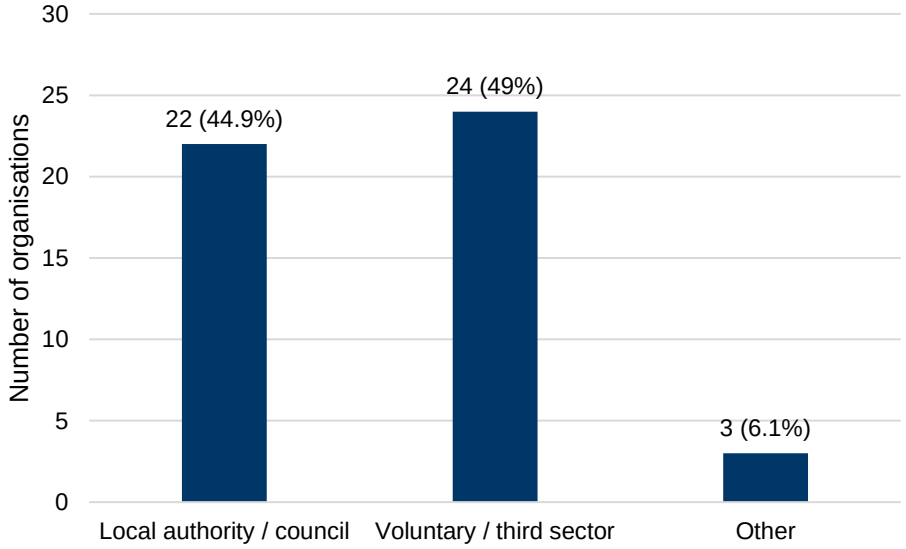
Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of organisations. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of organisations as the denominator.

Figure 36: How many Youth Work employees are in your organisation?



Number of organisations: 49

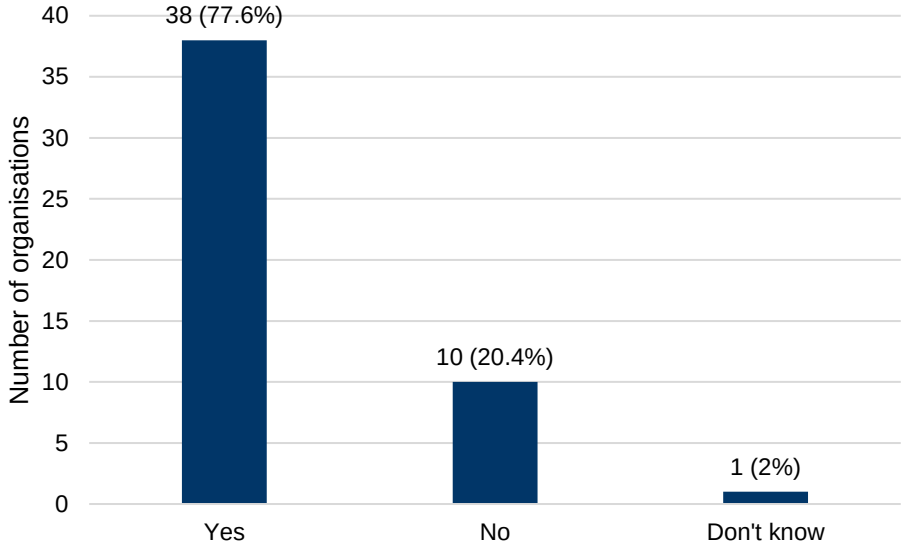
Figure 37: What sector is your organisation in?



Number of organisations: 49

'Private', 'uniformed services', and 'other' have been combined into a single 'Other' category due to small numbers of responses.

Figure 38: Does your organisation deliver training to Youth Workers and organisations that work with young people?

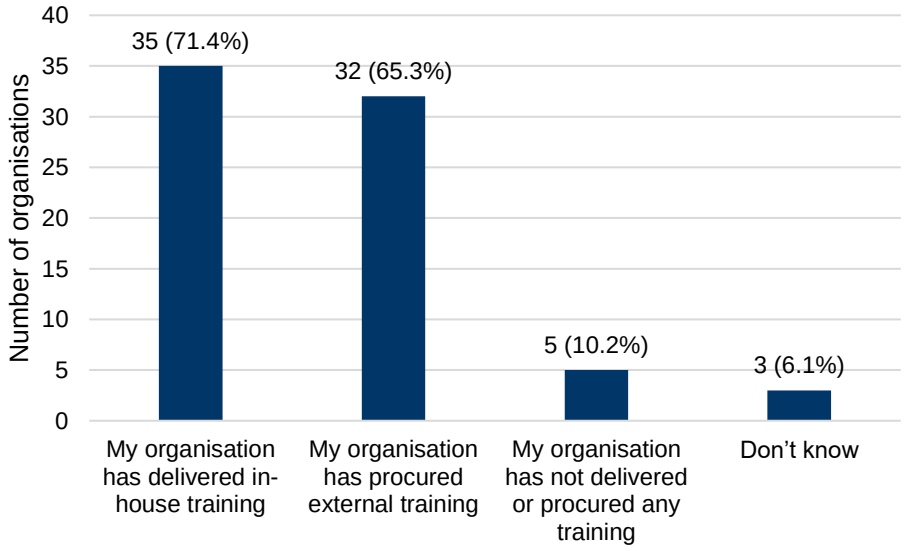


Number of organisations: 49

Training opportunities

The purpose of this section of the survey was to understand how training is delivered across Wales and whether organisations deliver internally or externally, also the reasons why organisations deliver internally or procure external trainers.

Figure 39: In the last 12 months, have you delivered in-house or procured external training to your organisation?



Number of organisations: 49

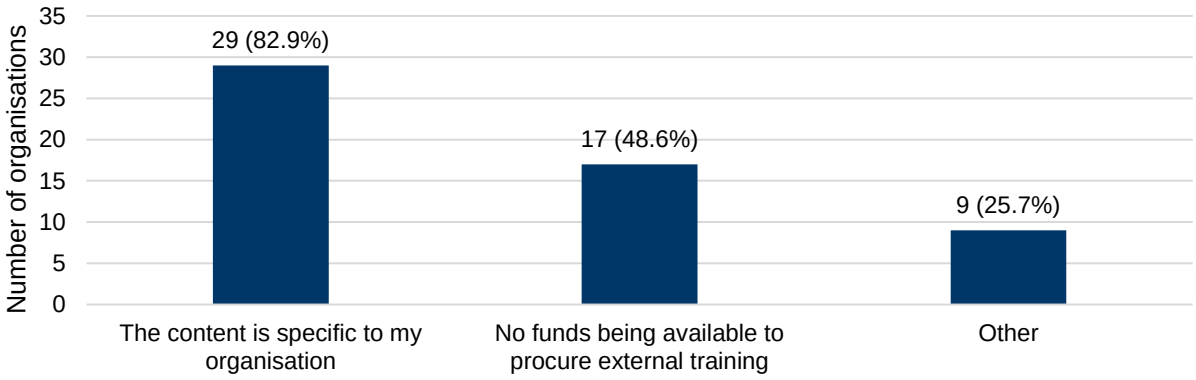
Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, column totals may not sum to the total number of organisations. Percentages have been calculated using the column total as the numerator and the number of organisations as the denominator.

Figure 39 would indicate that most organisations use a mixture of external and internal training delivery, with just over 10% of organisations doing neither, although mainly having a reliance on external training.

Those respondents who chose “My organisation has delivered in-house training” were asked additional questions, shown in Figure 40 and the open text below. Those respondents who chose “My organisation has procured external training” were asked an additional question, shown in Figure 41.

The open text responses support the training needs outlined in the individual survey, which starts at figure 17, suggesting that there is synergy between the individual practitioner and organisation’s needs.

Figure 40: Why did you decide to deliver in-house training to your organisation?



Number of organisations: 35

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, column totals may not sum to the total number of organisations. Percentages have been calculated using the column total as the numerator and the number of organisations as the denominator.

Most ‘Other’ responses indicated that they decided to deliver in house training as they had staff qualified or best placed to deliver training most relevant to the organisation which may have been of a higher standard or more relevant than what external providers could offer. Other reasons included training delivered as part of a wider project to external groups and a desire to receive training in the medium of Welsh.

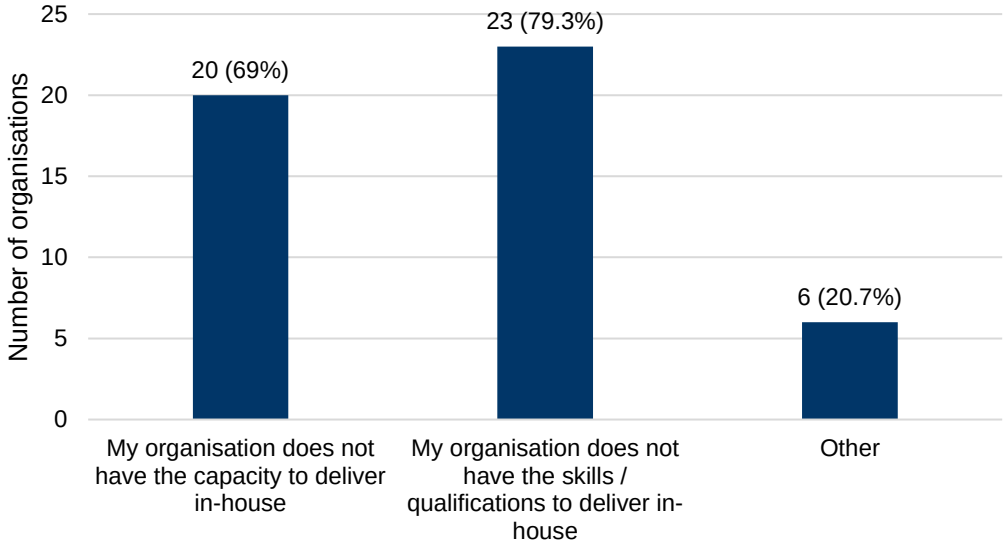
Figure 40 suggests that most content that is delivered internally is specific for that organisation although nearly half of respondents declared that there are no available funds to bring in external trainers to upskill their employees

Please list up to five training opportunities you delivered in the last 12 months, which have had the most impact (these questions were open text)

When asked to list five training opportunities delivered in the last 12 months, the most common response was specialist youth work qualifications, such as Level 2 & 3 certificates. Various types of safeguarding training also came up frequently, such as awareness and support with relation to trauma, abuse and violence. Several responses referenced training in mental health support and mental health first aid, as well as support with sexual health, addiction/substance abuse and more general counselling. Positive handling and dealing with difficult individuals were also mentioned, as were management, leadership and digital/social media training. Many other responses specifically mentioned awareness and support for individuals with specific needs, such as LGBTQ+, neurodivergent and religious individuals.

Number of organisations: 31

Figure 41: Why did you decide to procure external training to your organisation?



Number of organisations: 29

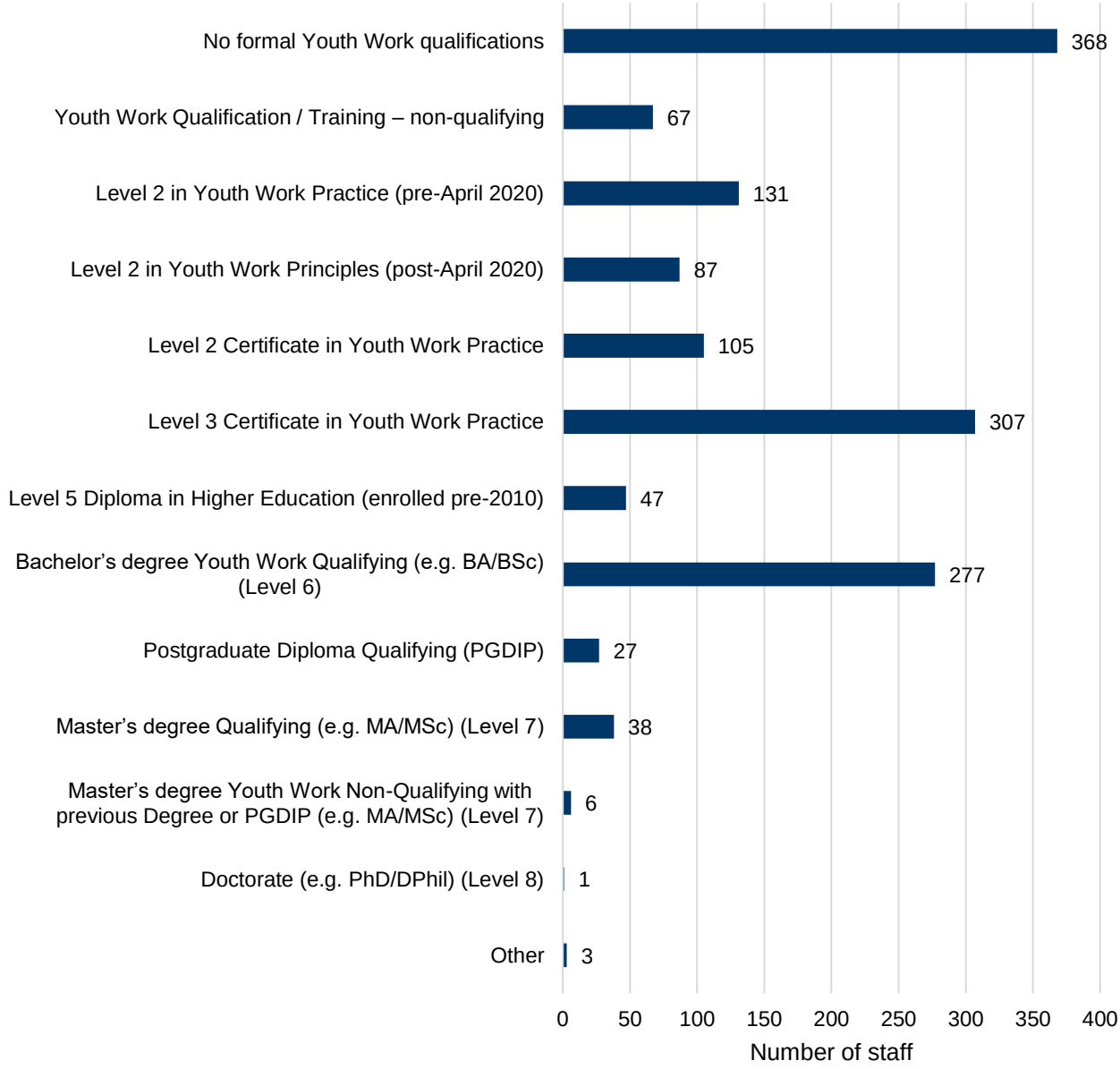
Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, column totals may not sum to the total number of organisations. Percentages have been calculated using the column total as the numerator and the number of organisations as the denominator.

'Other' responses included the importance of seeing new perspectives and ideas, staff being trained by externals to upskill and allow that training to be delivered in house in future and offers of free training.

Figure 41 shows that more support is needed around the infrastructure in the delivery of training, such as offering qualifications.

Figure 42: Please state the number of staff within your organisation, by their highest Youth Work qualification.

In figure 42 below, organisation leads were asked to audit their practitioners, who either work directly with young people or who are leaders or managers and based on their level of Youth Work qualification.



Number of organisations: 42

'Other' responses stated staff having Bachelor's degrees in Education (BEd Hons).

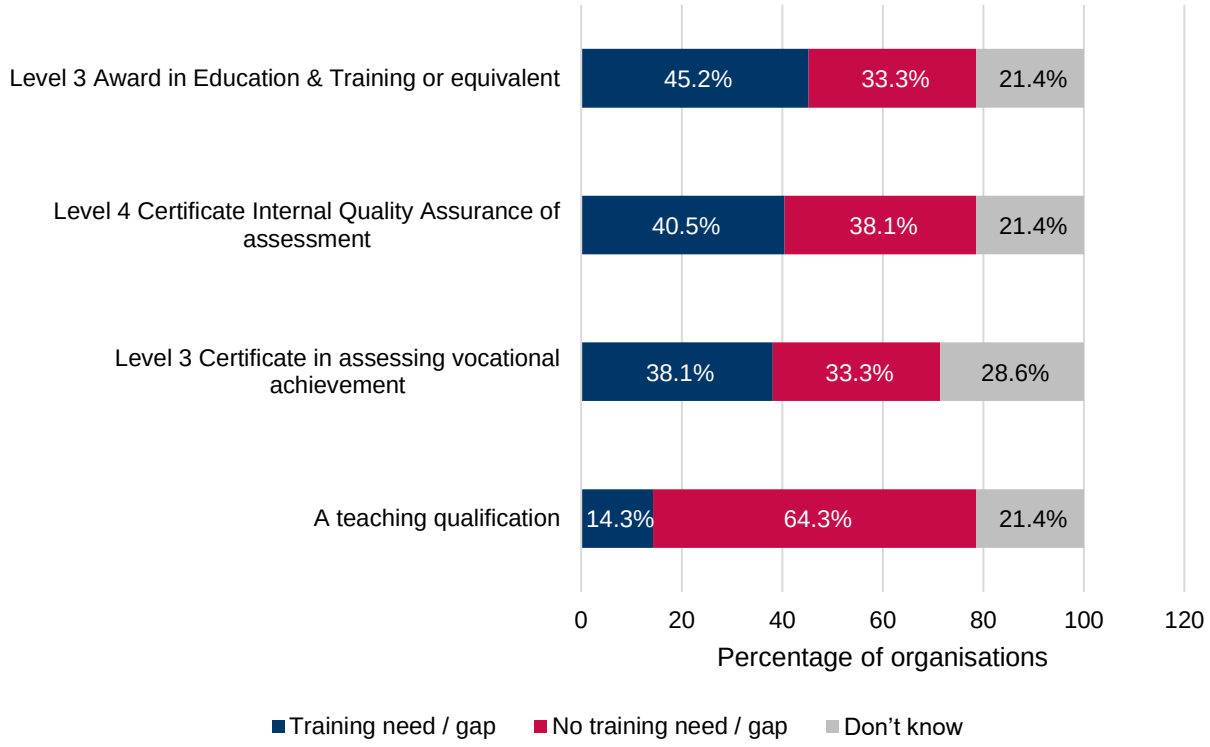
The data above clearly indicate that there are substantial numbers of people working in the youth work sector who are not qualified to level 3 and above, which will be the minimum level of qualification to register with EWC from May 2025 as a youth support worker. Whilst not all those qualified at lower levels will intend to increase their qualification for multiple reasons such as the very part time nature of their role, they are volunteers etc, there is an urgent need to prioritise support for those who wish to

progress to level 3. Training up to level 3 will be prioritised in the training plan to support those individuals from across Wales in any youth work organisations who wish to undertake the training.

Upon filtering the data, most organisations who have reported practitioners either with no formal qualifications or having the Level 2 Award in Youth Work Practice or Principles are from the voluntary sector, with a small number of respondents from the local authority sector also. Geographically, the data do not suggest a particular geographical area of need to target as it was generally balanced across Wales, although somewhat less so in Southeast Wales. Therefore, it is recommended that training for Youth Support Worker qualifications should be offered evenly across Wales, with support given to organisations to develop the infrastructure around Youth Work qualifications delivery (figure 33).

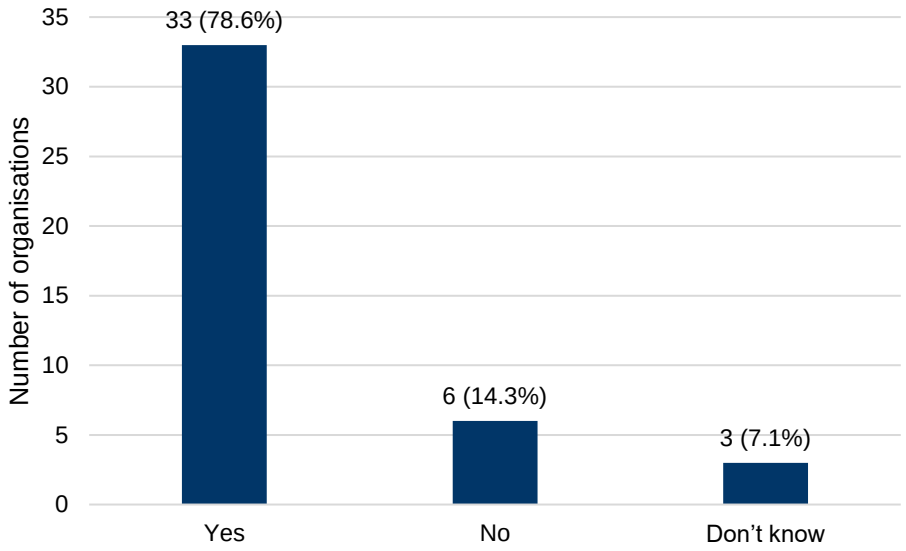
As previously stated, practitioners must hold at least the Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work Practice by May 2025, or they risk losing their registration status, which would mean that they would not be able to offer Youth Work in a paid capacity. The chart below highlights once again the need to support the sector in delivering the minimum Youth Work qualification along with qualifications for practitioners to be able to tutor, assess and quality assure vocational credit-based qualifications.

Figure 43: Is there a training need / gap for the following qualifications within your organisation?



Number of organisations: 42

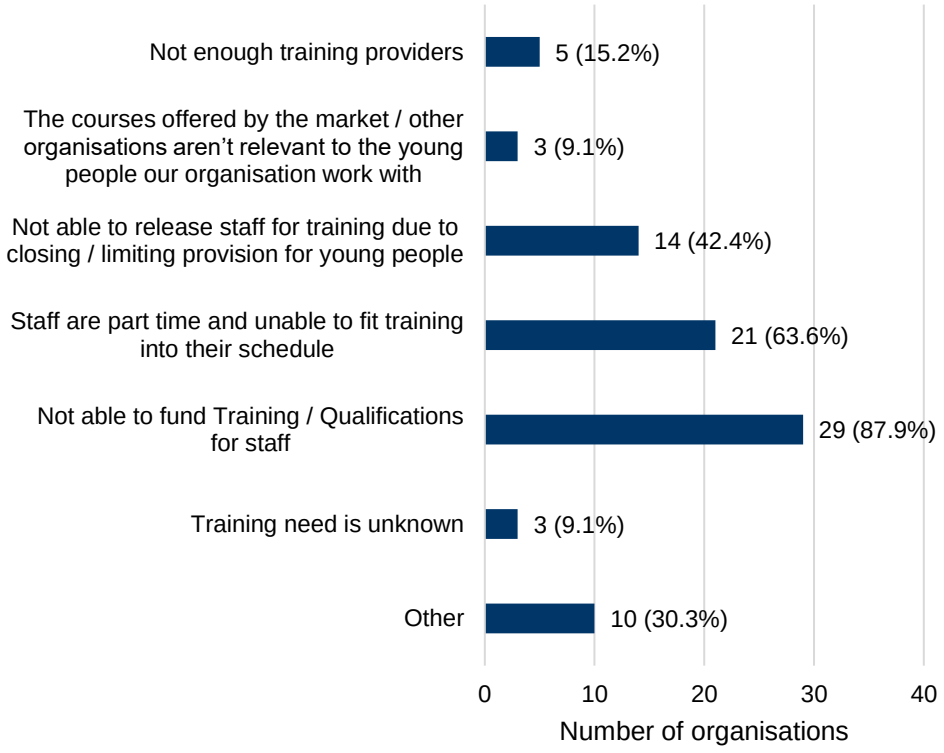
Figure 44: Are there any barriers to accessing training and qualifications for your staff?



Number of organisations: 42

Those respondents who chose "Yes" were asked an additional question, shown in Figure 45.

Figure 45: Please select the barriers to accessing training and qualifications for your organisation.



Number of organisations: 33

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of organisations. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of organisations as the denominator.

‘Other’ responses indicated issues with childcare, cost of travel and accommodation, a lack of training available through the medium of Welsh and staff unwilling to train due to uncertain hours and low pay.

As with the narrative above, for any qualification courses or professional learning to take place, it is recommended that when procuring training for practitioners, it should be as cost effective as possible, accessible and adaptable to encourage attendance.

Open text - What are the top three most important training needs within your organisation?

The most commonly identified training needs were professional youth work qualifications, followed by safeguarding training. Other needs identified include leadership & management, mental health and trauma support and positive handling/dealing with challenging behaviour.

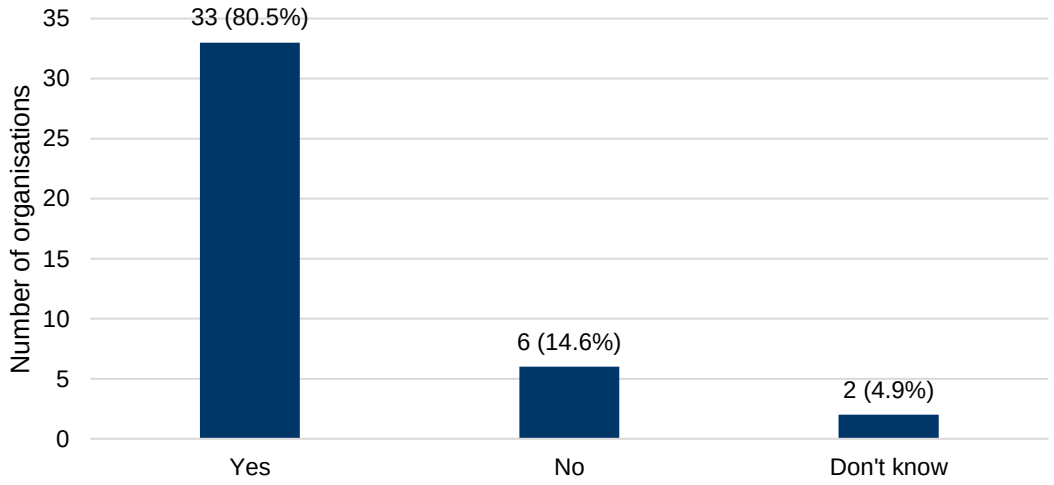
Number of organisations: 38

The open text responses back up the some of the points raised in the individual survey, with regards to safeguarding training, leadership and management, mental health and trauma support. Youth Workers often work with young people who present with challenging behaviour, and this is currently covered as a mandatory unit in the Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work Practice, therefore by taking part in the Youth Support qualification, this should give practitioners sufficient knowledge on how to deal with challenging behaviour. Although, a further investigation should be conducted to explore whether that is sufficient or further learning is required.

Recruitment and retention

Recruitment and retention continue to be an issue for the Youth Work sector in Wales: the chart below in figure 46 provides evidence that more than 80% of organisations have been affected by recruitment and retention. Figure 47 demonstrates how deeply organisations are affected by recruitment and retention, with an even spread of issues, the highest of which, 'staff working beyond their capacity', may affect retention as staff can be overworked, potentially resulting in burnout. The data also show that recruitment and retention is affecting provision for young people.

Figure 46: In the last 12 months, has recruitment and retention of Youth Work staff affected your organisation's ability to deliver services to young people?



Number of organisations: 41

Those respondents who chose "Yes" were asked an additional question, shown in Figure 47.

Figure 47: How has your organisations' ability to deliver services to young people been affected by recruitment and retention of Youth Work staff in the last 12 months?

Number of organisations: 33

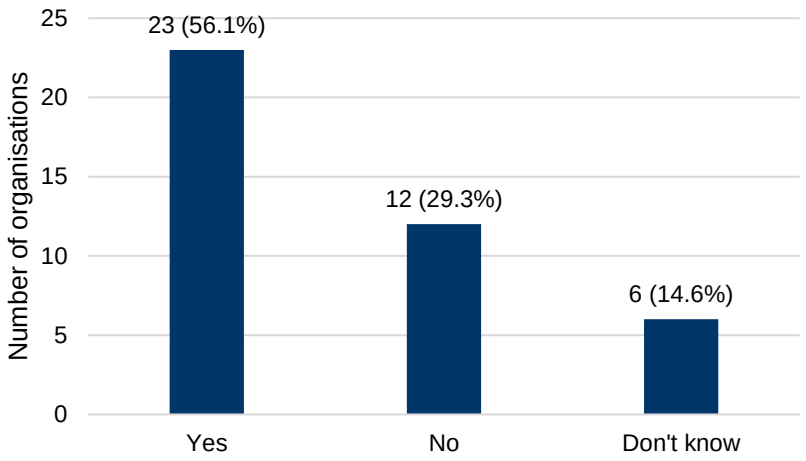
Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of organisations. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of organisations as the denominator.

'Other' responses generally mentioned a shortage of staff relating to a loss of funding, redundancies and an inability to recruit as well as existing staff having limited time for training and an inability to provide services in Welsh.

Recruitment

The section below is framed around understanding the recruitment picture that organisations are faced with when recruiting suitable Youth Work staff, and the impact recruitment issues has had on organisations and their ability to work with young people.

Figure 48: In the last 12 months, has your organisation been able to successfully recruit the Youth Work staff your organisation needs to deliver services for young people?

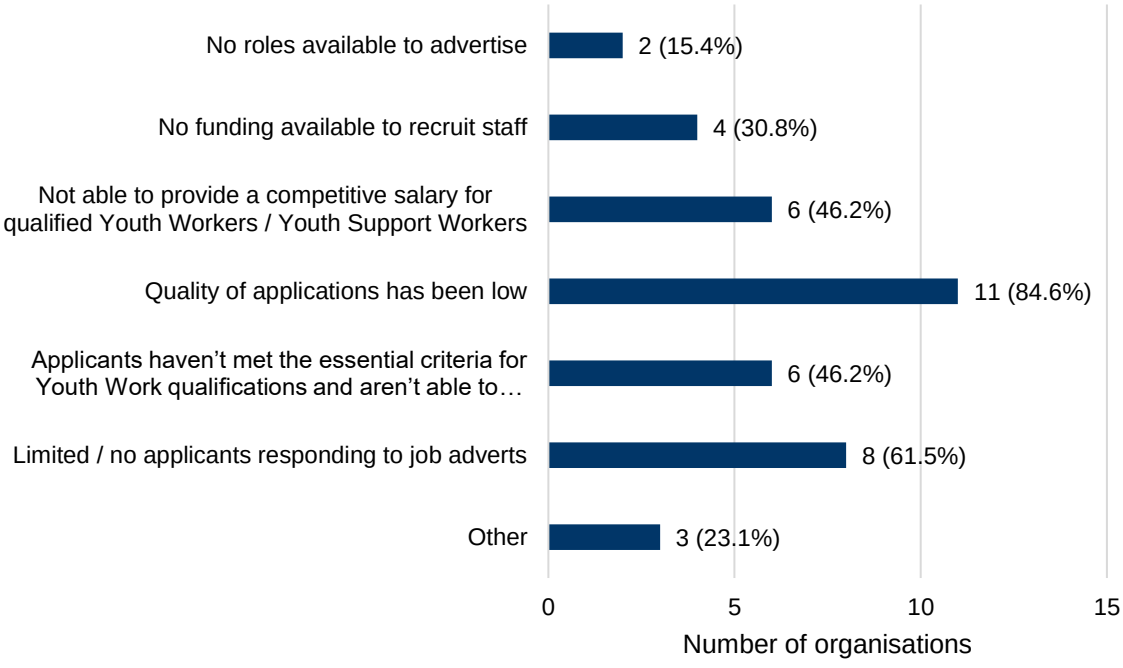


Number of organisations: 41

Those respondents who chose “No” were asked an additional question, shown in Figure 49.

The data above indicate that over half of organisations have been able to recruit, although it is unclear whether some organisations may have been both successful and unsuccessful at recruiting Youth Work practitioners.

Figure 49: How has your organisation not been able to successfully recruit Youth Work Staff?



Number of organisations: 12

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of organisations. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of organisations as the denominator.

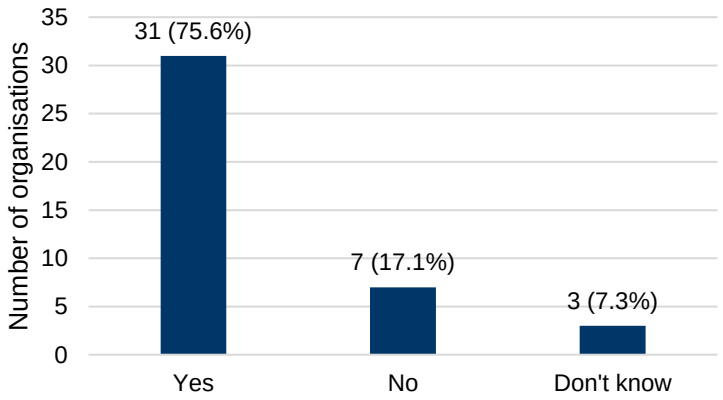
'Other' responses included short term contracts and funding, job freeze, and having to offer trainee jobs instead of recruiting fully trained staff.

In figure 49, it is clearly highlighted that practitioners need help with job applications, as many declared job application standards have been low.

Retention

The section below outlines retention of Youth Work practitioners within their organisations, by means of understanding the amount and reasons for staff leaving. The data below show that retention affects all parts of the sector, although a high proportion of practitioners leaving are from the local authorities.

Figure 50: In the last 12 months, has your organisation experienced Youth Work staff leaving the organisation?

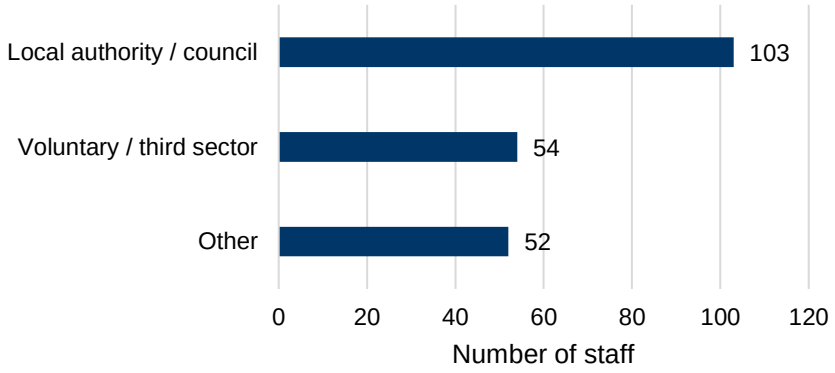


Number of organisations: 41

Those respondents who chose "Yes" were asked an additional question, shown in Figure 51.

Figure 52 shows that nearly half of known reasons for practitioners leaving their organisation is 'Youth Workers leaving for higher paid roles not in Youth Work'. This could be that other professions / organisations that aren't directly related to Youth Work value the skills that Youth Workers bring. The other responses gave a mixture of reasons.

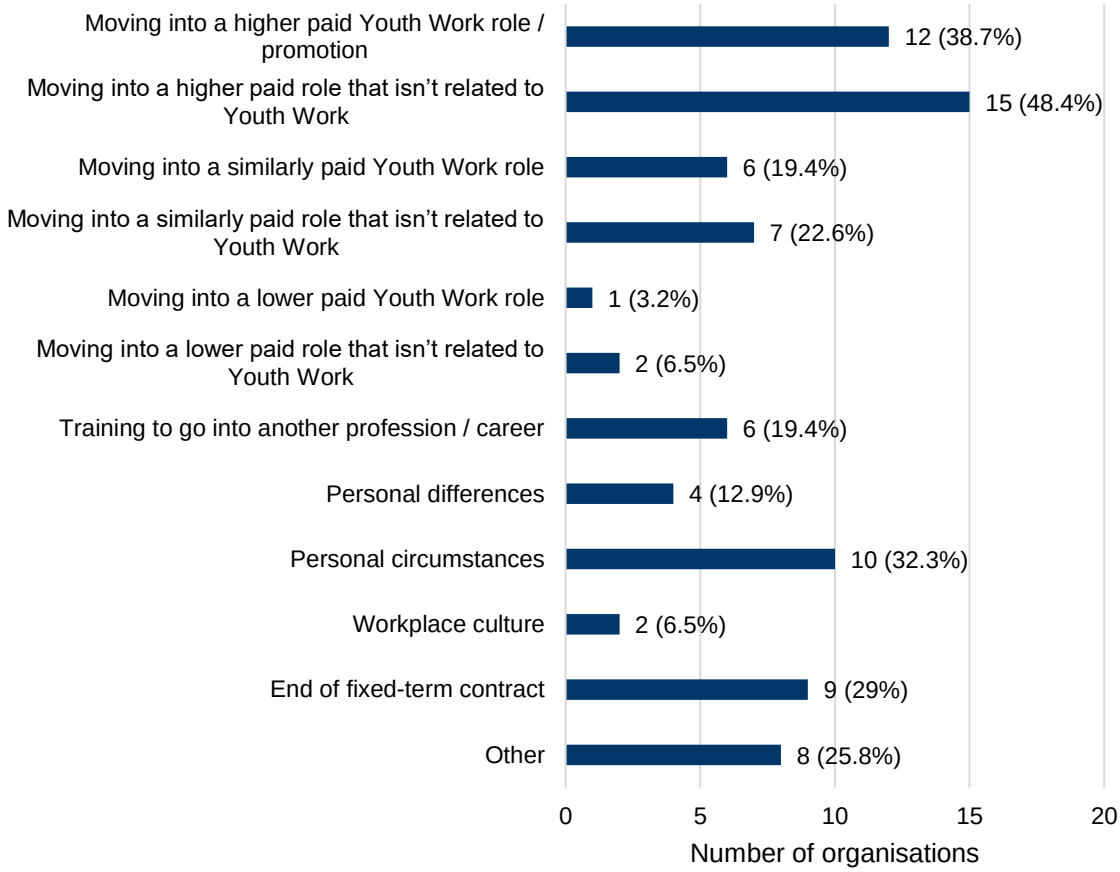
Figure 51: How many Youth Work staff have left the organisation in the last 12 months? (by sector)



Number of organisations: 31

The 'Other' sectors in which Youth Work staff have left the organisation include Education, Further Education and Adult Learning, uniformed organisations and emergency services.

Figure 52: If known, what were the main known reasons Youth Work staff left your organisation in the last 12 months?



Number of organisations: 31

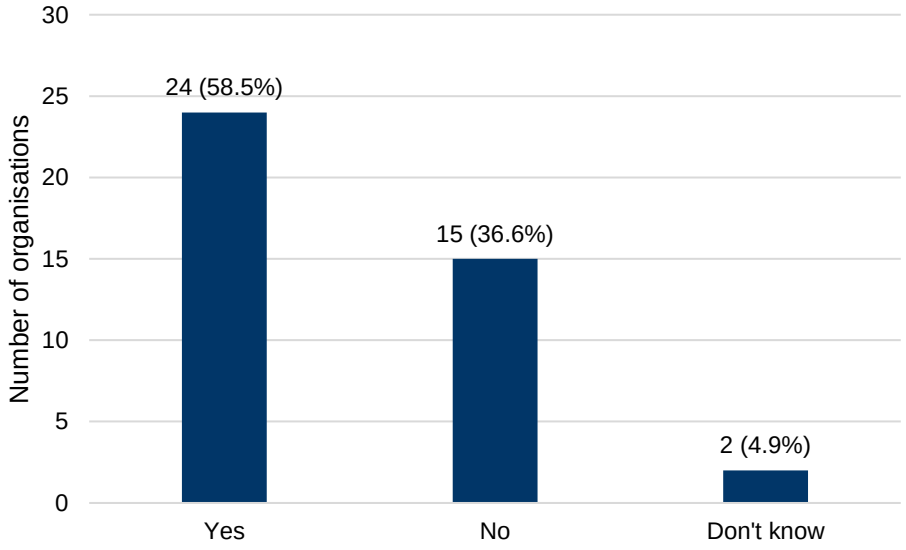
Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of organisations. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of organisations as the denominator.

'Other' responses included a lack of job security, redundancies/lack of funding to keep staff, and moving into roles that are longer term or full-time.

Welsh Language Youth Work provision

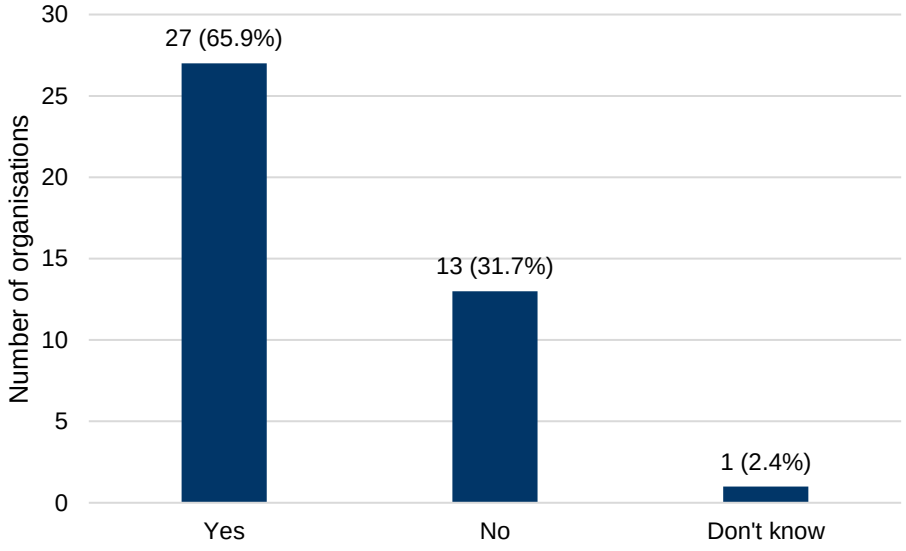
As part of Cymraeg 2050, the Youth Work sector in Wales is supporting Welsh Government's target of a Million Welsh Language speakers by 2050, in addition to supporting young people to access Youth Work services in Welsh or in English.

Figure 53: Does your organisation currently offer any of your services only through the medium of Welsh?



Number of organisations: 41

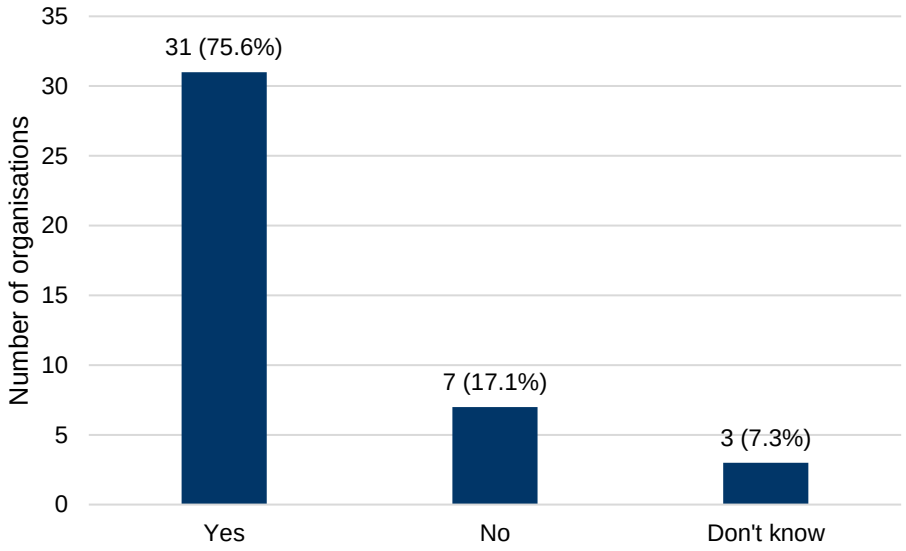
Figure 54: Does your organisation currently offer any of your services only through the medium of English?



Number of organisations: 41

Figure 55: Does your organisation currently offer any of your services bi-lingually in English and Welsh?

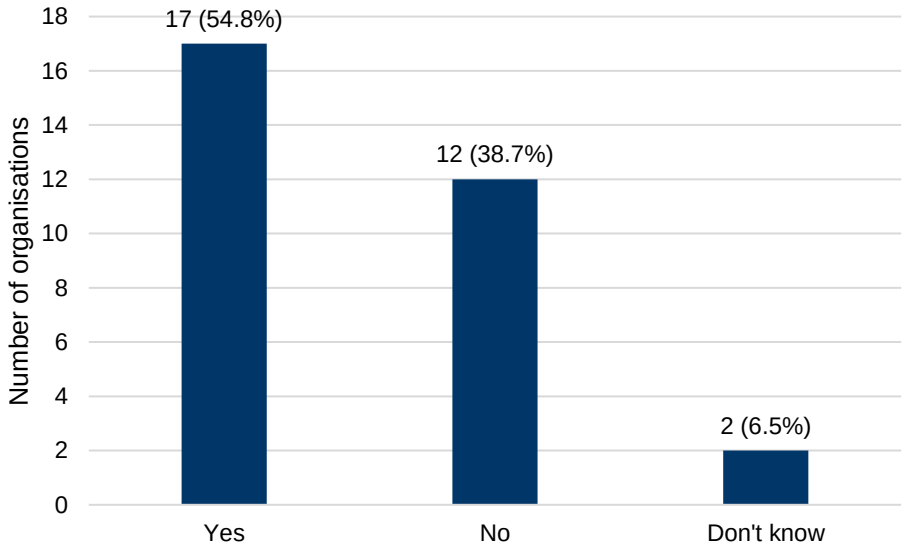
In the chart below, respondents were asked about their service delivery in English and Welsh, although it is open to interpretation as there is no formal definition of bilingual delivery of Youth Work, as some organisations have their own definitions or policies relating to service delivery.



Number of organisations: 41

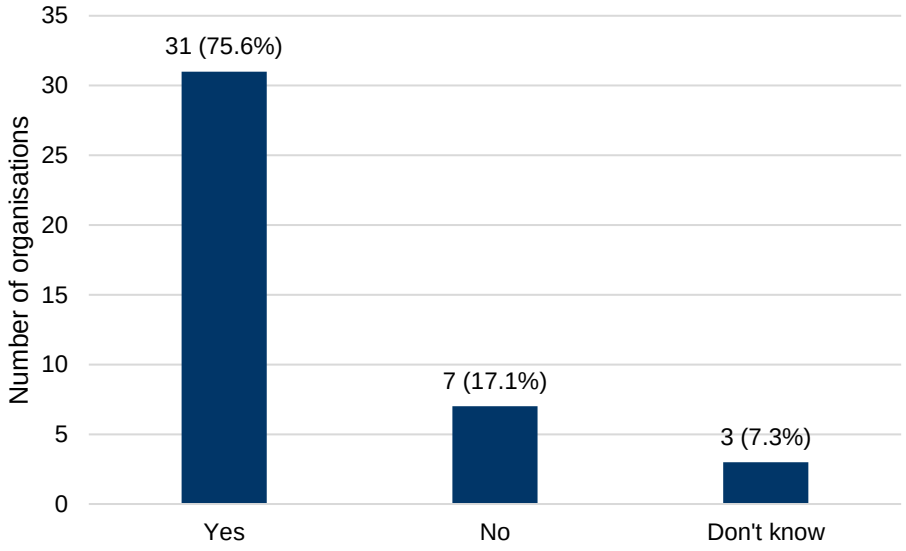
Those respondents who chose “Yes” were asked an additional question, shown in Figure 56.

Figure 56: Are the bi-lingual services your organisation offers in partnership with any other organisation(s)?



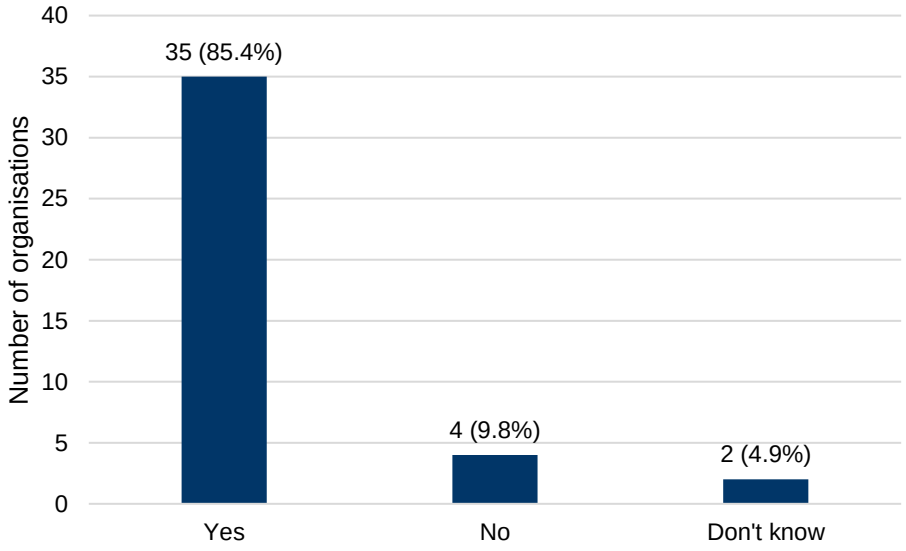
Number of organisations: 31

Figure 57: Does your organisation offer young people the opportunity to learn about Wales e.g. Welsh language, Welsh culture and history with young people?



Number of organisations: 41

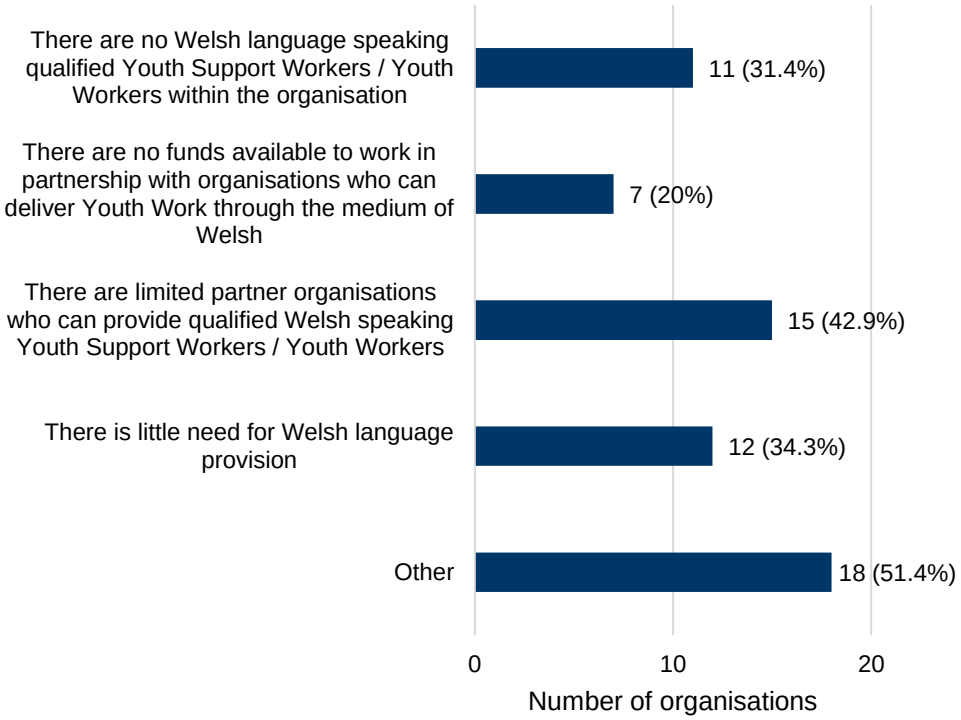
Figure 58: Over the last 5 years, has your organisation tried to increase the level of services offered through the medium of Welsh / bi-lingually?



Number of organisations: 41

Those respondents who chose “Yes” were asked an additional question, shown in Figure 59.

Figure 59: What challenges has your organisation faced when trying to increase the level of services offered through the medium of Welsh / bi-lingually?

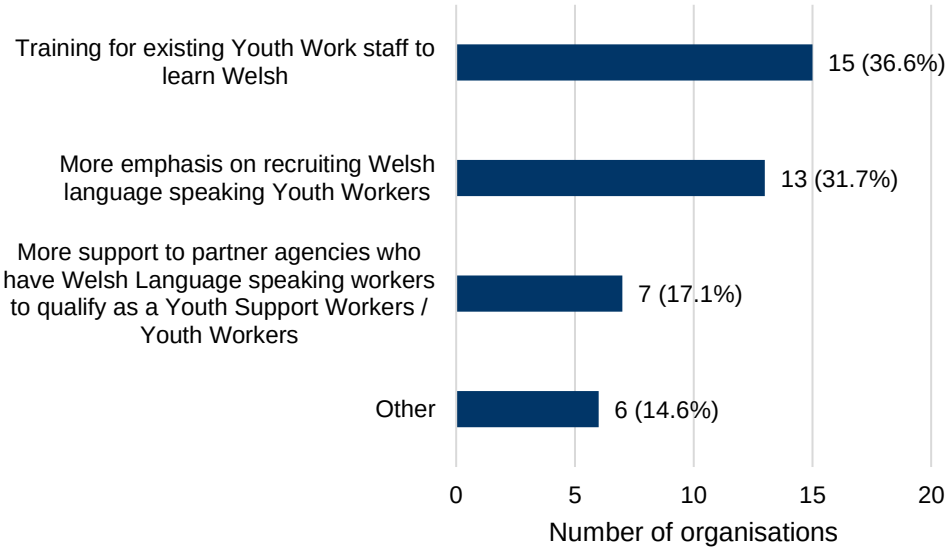


Number of organisations: 35

Respondents were given the options to select all choices that were applicable to them. Therefore, row totals may not sum to the total number of organisations. Percentages have been calculated using the row total as the numerator and the number of organisations as the denominator.

'Other' responses included staff lacking the confidence to deliver training in Welsh and difficulties with recruiting staff who are both fluent and fully qualified, as well as no challenges due to succeeding in increasing the level of services.

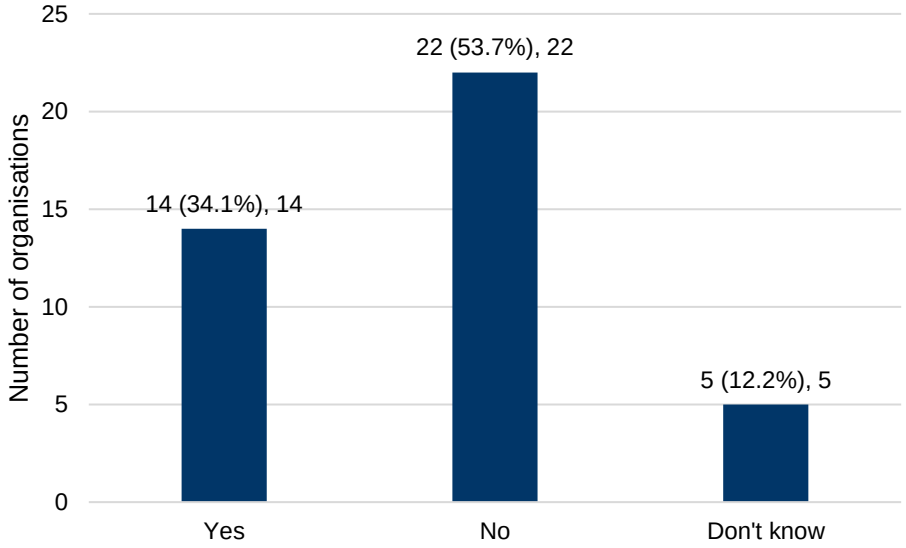
Figure 60: What is the most important area that will help your organisation to increase the level of services offered through the medium of Welsh / bi-lingually?



Number of organisations: 41

'Other' responses included increasing the sufficiency of Youth Work to allow for a greater focus on Welsh medium Youth Work, increased funding and improved relationships with Welsh medium schools in the area.

Figure 61: Has your organisation undertaken any engagement with young people to gather their views on Welsh-medium Youth Work provision?



Number of organisations: 41

Most responses above suggest that organisations offer Youth Work bilingually or in partnership with an/other organisation/s. Whilst 58% of organisations offer one or more services for young people in Welsh, there are relatively low numbers of fluent Welsh speakers, as indicated on both surveys. By addressing the need increase more fluent Welsh speakers, who can offer Youth Work through the medium of Welsh can lead to an increase in actual delivery of Welsh Language delivery. The data above also suggest that there is appetite within the sector to support existing Youth Workers to learn Welsh and be confident in using the language and use it when working with young people.

Summary of actions to follow:

The Skills and Training Audit results will be used to shape the training programme for Youth Work in Wales over the next 12 / 24 months. Work will be undertaken, and is already in hand, to identify training that meets the needs of practitioners and supports their professional development and confidence in providing effective youth work services to the young people of Wales.

Specifically, it is our intention to:

1. Develop a robust training programme and concentrate efforts on the delivery of, and support for, Youth Work qualifications so that practitioners in Wales can register as Youth Workers and Youth Support Workers with the EWC. This survey suggests that there is a significant number of practitioners who do not have the Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work Practice. It is unrealistic that this can be covered in one year, therefore this should form part of a 3-year plan.
2. Include in the training programme support for organisations and practitioners to develop the infrastructure around qualifications delivery by offering the Level 3 Award in Education and Training, Assessment in Vocational Qualifications and Internal Quality Assurance. This will support qualifications delivery with young people and Youth Workers.
3. Develop safeguarding training that can be applied within a Youth Work setting but does not replace the group A and B training framework, developed by Social Care Wales (more information can be found here).
4. Develop a progressive framework of Leadership and Management training in a Youth Work setting for practitioners, recognising that leadership can take place at many levels, and to support those aspiring for future roles in management.
5. Develop the training programme to include the professional learning topics outlined in figure 17-21 on the individual survey. Priority should be given to topics with 15% or more respondents choosing very unconfident or fairly unconfident in that specific topic area.
6. Promote and signpost practitioners to existing programmes to learn Welsh, and work with partners to develop initiatives for workers to gain confidence in using the Welsh language and applying it in a Youth Work provision.
7. Run a Skills and Training Audit regularly, but not annually, to monitor progress and prioritise training; and commence professional learning surveys annually to ensure Youth Workers remain up to date with latest trends and needs of young people.
8. Develop training and qualifications that are accessible, modern and a mix of traditional and ‘non-traditional’ methods, to ensure that practitioners may access training that is appropriate and flexible, and provision for young people continues to be relevant and meets needs.

A special thank you to all the participants and organisations who took part in this survey.