

## CASE STUDY

### BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

#### BACKGROUND

Bridgend is a county borough in the historic county of Glamorgan. It has a total population of 139,200 and contains the settlements of Bridgend, Maesteg and the seaside town of Porthcawl. The largest town is Bridgend.

The county borough which lies at the geographical heart of South Wales was formed in April 1996 under the Local Government (Wales) Act 1996. Its representative at the National Assembly for Wales is Carwyn Jones, the First Minister.

#### Youth Service in Bridgend County Borough

*The youth service in Wales refers to the framework by which youth work is delivered and is developed through the local authority, major voluntary youth organisations and through independent local projects.*

Youth work involves the education and development, both social and personal, of young people aged between 11 and 25 years (particularly those aged 13 to 19 years) and is delivered in a variety of settings including youth clubs, residential settings, in information, advice and counselling centres, on the streets and in various public locations where young people meet and through special issue-based projects etc.

The Youth Service in Bridgend County Borough is concerned with the fundamental and personal development of young people between 11 and 25 years old. It provides an inclusive service and strives to encourage, involve and empower young people through informal learning opportunities within a variety of different settings. Through the work of the Youth Service young people are supported within a process that enables them to become valued citizens within their communities,

One of the key themes of the Youth Service in Bridgend County Borough is

- *Health, Wellbeing, Information, Support, Advice & Guidance*

Information, Advice and Guidance services enable young people to make informed choices, based upon a clear understanding of the issues involved and the consequences of their chosen actions. Guidance services are in depth support services that are based upon a clear understanding of the individual needs of the young person, this may include targeted interventions for specific issues or specialist service provision such as counselling. This theme focuses upon **the wellbeing of young people** and promotes positive physical, emotional and mental health at the forefront of service provision

Youth Service is a distinct profession with its own qualifications framework and national occupational standards (NOS), with local authority provision dating from the 1930s.

There is a comprehensive staff development programme which offers a range of relevant training courses. This programme is devised as a direct result of a skills and training needs analysis conducted with all service providers giving up to date information on the qualifications of staff and provides a basis that influences course delivery. Staff development also supports self-evaluation, self-assessment, supervision, induction and appraisal. One of the main aspects of staff development is to provide a coherent route whereby youth workers can become professionally qualified, which will then offer a foundation for a professional service

## **Using NOS**

The NOS relating to substance misuse help inform /underpin a significant part of the activities relating to health and well being agenda operated by youth work service in the County Borough. They are used by Youth Service to set their own agenda, write policy guidelines and procedures which help staff work more effectively with young people and put them at the heart of what is delivered. They help to work more holistically, bringing in partners where necessary and supporting young people in attending appointments.

Both employer and employees agree that NOS set benchmarks for employees to work towards and they give them a clear view of what is expected of them.

One young person commented:

*“The staff at the Youth Service has supported me over the past few months to attend appointments. They have given me a youth worker I can contact whenever I feel the need to do so. I don’t know anything about NOS, but I do know the people in the youth service have been there for me and helped me stop taking drugs.”*

## **Benefits**

There are clear benefits to the organisation and its staff and the quality of service it provides:

- Staff benefit by having clear guidelines and policies based on/linked to NOS
- The organisation/employer benefit as staff are clear about what’s expected of them. As a result they can work effectively, offering young people the best service possible, which in turn reflects on management.
- Young people benefit through the receiving high quality service.

Undoubtedly, when staff have clear aims and objectives they tend to work more effectively which in turn has a knock-on effect which impacts on the service as a whole.

For the future, this employer would like to continue to use NOS as benchmarks for effective practices.

Date: December 2014