Annual Monitoring of Youth and Community Work Programmes

Professionally validated by the National Youth Agency 2015/2016

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1.0   Background

The National Youth Agency (NYA) 'Professional Validation: Guidance and Requirements' document sets out the requirements and the Process for the Professional Validation of Higher Education Programmes which are currently recognised by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) as conferring professionally qualified status for Youth Workers in England. The NYA's Annual Monitoring Process is detailed on pages 22 and 23 of the aforementioned document. The Professional Validation Guidelines have been amended and uploaded to the NYA website at www.nya.org.uk.

This report outlines the findings of the annual review of professionally validated programmes pro forma - 2015/16, for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

The overall procedure for validations comes within the purview of the NYA's Education Training Standards Committee (ETS). This is a requirement for Higher Education Institutes to maintain JNC status for youth work programmes. On-going discussions around these processes, for all aspects of validation, including annual monitoring, are agreed by the ETS, who consider that the current approach to validations remains robust.

The process remains as last year, the ETS committee concluded that due to challenges and pressures on staff and budgets, that the moderation visits as part of this annual monitoring process would not take place.

The annual monitoring process continues to request statistical data and some qualitative information, captured by an enhanced pro forma. This is undertaken online, thus reducing the need for paper copies to be sent and to allow for automated statistical collation. The data contains valuable evidence, which informs this Annual Monitoring report. The pro forma provides statistical information that may flag concerns to the NYA (withdrawal, poor recruitment, staffing levels etc.) and the NYA contacts any programmes to follow up any concerns identified and still retains the option of implementing a formal investigative procedure, including monitoring visits, that may result in the withdrawal of professionally validated status.

The Higher Education Institutes (HEI's) have the main responsibility for the monitoring and quality assurance of the programmes. However, the NYA monitors programmes in order to retain a view on whether programmes continue to operate in accordance with the requirements of professional JNC validation.

The objectives of the Annual Monitoring are:

- To ensure that the programme is operating in accordance with the criteria for professional validation and JNC requirements.
- To alert the Education Training Standards Committee (ETS) to overall patterns and trends in education and training.

(Participation in the annual monitoring process is a requirement for the continuing professional validated status of a programme).

2.0   Methodology

Institutions are required to complete the online 'NYA Annual Monitoring pro forma' for each programme that is validated by the NYA. The following quantitative and qualitative information is required;

- Data on admission, progression and completion and the demographic profile of student numbers;
- Data on staffing levels, placements and supervisors;
- Confirmation of quality assurance within the programme with main strengths and development areas highlighted.

Survey Monkey was used for data collection to simplify the process for HEI's and enable direct data analysis by the NYA.

The collection of quantitative data is not perfect, with some HEI's still not providing all information for all students in a consistent way across programmes. This means that there are different totals for data on different categories – for example; attendance ratios do not match recruitment totals. To ensure that analysis is as robust as possible, calculations are based on those who answered a particular question. This is highlighted in the methodology, and, therefore, some caution is needed, particularly around trends over time.

3.0   Response Rate 2015/16

Pro-formas were disseminated to **33** institutions offering **53** programmes, with a request for completed forms to be returned by January 2017.

All **33** institutions representing **53** programmes responded. There were **3** new courses and **1** withdrawn. **5** courses were not running and **2** courses had no students studying on them.

Figure 1.

The table below shows that the number of programmes has reduced, from 60 to 53 programmes nationally since the 2014/15 report.
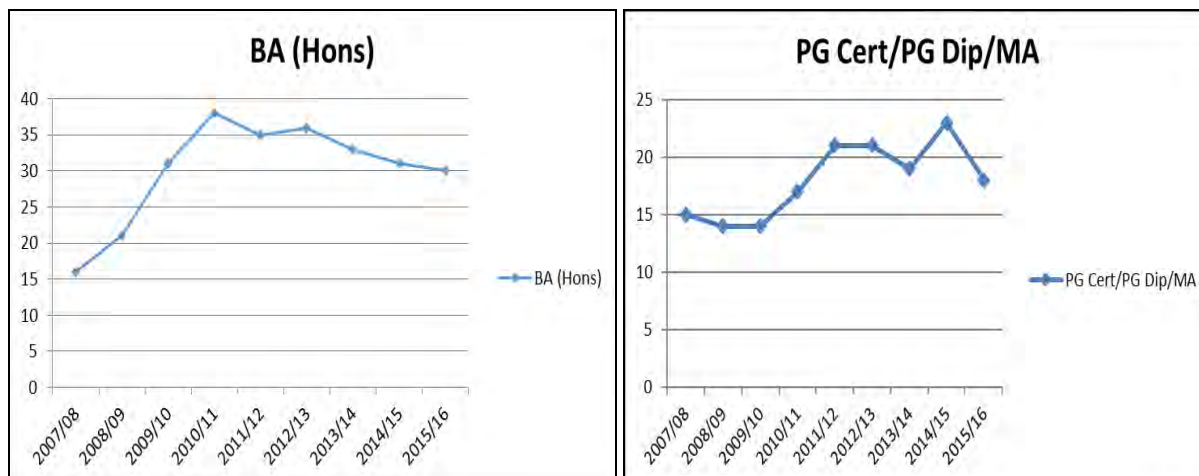
Figure 1: Number of Programmes and HEIs
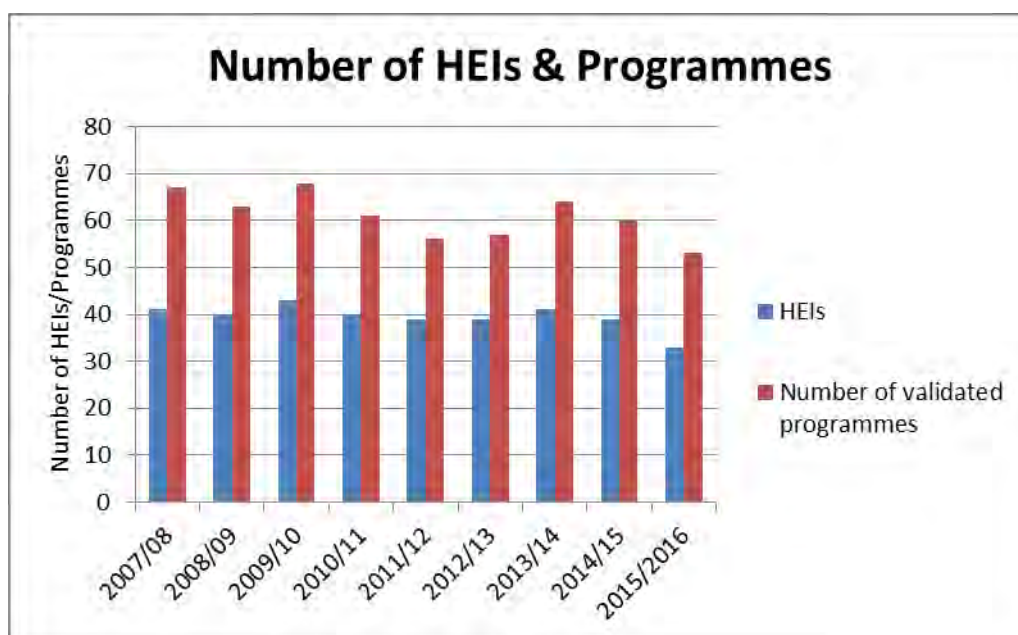
The total of 53 submissions received from 33 HEIs, gives a response rate of 100% for both HEIs and programmes.

From here on, data from the 53 submissions is considered within the report.

**Figure 2: Number of programmes by qualification**

The charts above show a slight decrease in the number of validated BA (Hons) programmes to 30 programmes being delivered. Postgraduate programmes have decreased more steeply, bringing their total down to 18 this year.

Figure 3

The regional analysis of HEIs enables a picture to be presented of the location of youth work programmes. There is a decrease in programmes nationally, and most significantly the Eastern region still has no programmes on offer, which has been the case for the last two years.

	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total	%
East Midlands	6	3	9	15%
Greater London	4	3	7	15%
North East	1	1	2	4%
North West	4	4	8	15%
South East	4	2	6	10%
South West	3	3	6	13%
West Midlands	3	2	5	10%
Yorkshire & Humberside	6	4	10	19%
	31	22	53	
	58%	42%	%	

The table and diagram provide an overview of the comparative share of programmes by region. In previous years Yorkshire & Humberside and the East Midlands have had by far the largest share of programmes nationally. This has changed somewhat with the North West and Greater London catching up and sharing a similar number.

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Number and Programme Type per Region
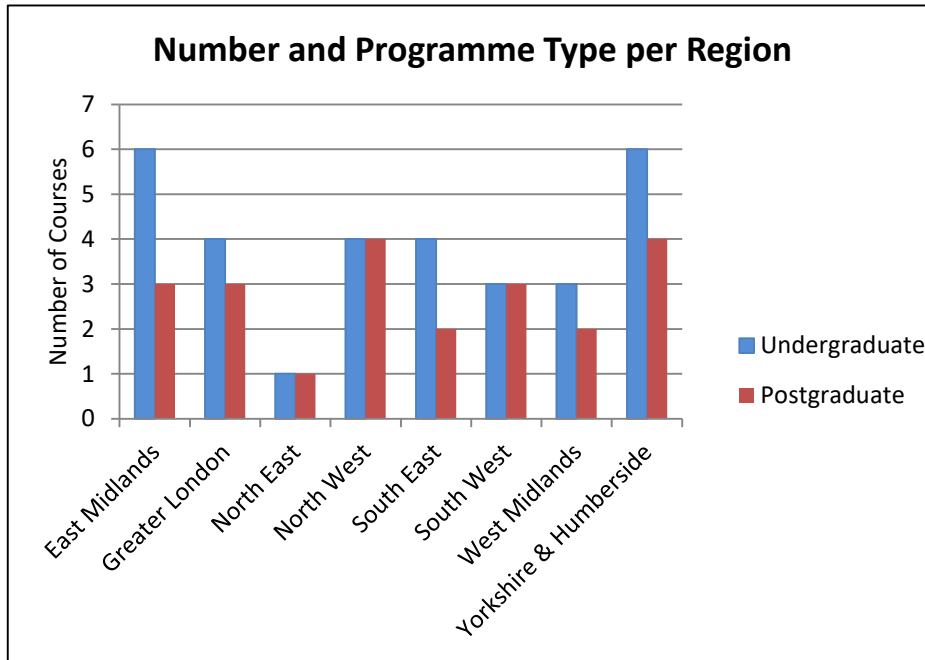
The figures relate to the geographical base for the programme. Distance learning providers may have cohorts of students studying in other regions and this should be considered when reviewing numbers.

4.0   Analysis of Data

4.1   Core Staffing

The numbers of Core staff delivering programmes across the piece has decreased over the past year. Shown overleaf in figure 4 and 5 are the figures for 2014/15 and those for 2015/16.

Overall, the numbers indicate a reversal of the declining trend with an increase in JNC qualification of lecturers, tutors and teaching staff on 2014/15 levels. In particularly there has been an increase in full time staff. Non JNC staff have remained relatively stable on last year's figures.

This is an unexpected view and caution needs to be taken, especially as it indicates less programmes with more staffing overall. Figures may be distorted and associated data and narrative does not offer explanation for this. One explanation may be that data includes staff that are in the process of closing programmes and will drop away next year as contracts end. Annual monitoring will pay particular attention to this next year to see whether levels revert back to an expected view.

Figure 4   2014/15   **Figure 5   2015/16**

60 PROGRAMMES					53 PROGRAMMES			
Core Staff Contributions - JNC 2014/15	F/T	P/T	Total		Core Staff Contributions - JNC	F/T	P/T	Total
Lecturers	122	88	200		Lecturers	141	73	214
Tutor	15	57	72		Tutor	19	72	91
Teaching Staff	8	25	33		Teaching Staff	17	25	42
PhD Students	1	3	4		PhD Students	0	3	3
Researchers	3		3		Researchers	0	0	0
Other		3	3		Other	4	0	4
	139	176	315			181	173	354

Core Staff Contributions - Non JNC 2014/15	F/T	P/T	Total		Core Staff Contributions - Non JNC	F/T	P/T	Total
Lecturers	57	34	91		Lecturers	54	36	90
Tutor	10	6	16		Tutor	7	18	25
Teaching Staff	7	12	19		Teaching Staff	15	11	26
PhD Students		3	3		PhD Students	0	0	0
Researchers		1	1		Researchers	1	1	2
Other					Other	4	5	9
Total	74	56	130			81	71	152

The number of visiting external lecturers has increased since 2014/2015, when it dropped to 200, and it has regained the levels seen in 2013/14.

The numbers of internal lecturers used has seen a small decline, after last year's substantial drop from 125 to 82.

Figure 6

	2014/15	2015/16
Visiting External Lecturers	200	253
Shared Internal Lecturers	82	76

4.2 Fieldwork Placements

The average number of placements and fieldwork supervisors within the programmes are recorded for the last six years and is shown in **Figures 7 a) + b)** below:

Figure 7: a) Average numbers of placements and supervisors

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Placements	43	45	42	40	36	25
Supervisors	43	43	38	34	31	26

b) Actual Numbers of Agencies and Supervisors Used

	2014/15	2015/16
Placements	1549	1347
Supervisors	1765	1405

The average number of placements has significantly dropped again since 2014/15. These figures show that the average number of placements has fallen by 11 and the number of supervisors has dropped by 5. Institutions continue to comment on the difficulty of finding suitable placements. This is mainly cited as due to the cutbacks being experienced in local government and youth work increasingly being delivered in non-traditional settings eg health care services, youth offending.

Cuts are also having an impact upon voluntary sector providers, who may have previously received grant funding from local authorities, which is not now available. This can be demonstrated by the nature of the settings for student placements which has become far more varied over the past couple of years and this has equally had an impact upon JNC supervisors. This situation has continued into 2015/16.

Figure 8 (below) shows the average percentage of supervisors with JNC qualifications. Although last year we witnessed a significant fall in the figures, this year there is an increase from 61% in 2014/15 to 69% in 2015/16. This is encouraging and appears that HEIs are making positive steps in ensuring students have access to JNC supervision despite changing circumstances and the challenges this has brought.

Figure 8: Average percentage of supervisors with JNC qualifications

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
% of Qualified Supervisors	72	67	74	76	61	69

4.3 Recruitment and student numbers

The target total for student recruitment onto professionally validated programmes this year was **694,** the actual recruitment number was **673,** a significant decrease in the student cohort on last year.

Figure 9 below shows this year's recruitment. Despite sector changes HEIs have still managed to recruit 97% of their expected target, but actual numbers show a substantial decrease on previous years.

Figure 9: Recruitment to programmes (student numbers)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Actual	1277	1135	951	825	701	793	673
Target	1214	1152	1013	1037	811	847	694
%of target achieved	105%	99%	94%	80%	86%	93.6%	97%

However, of the 51 responding programmes only 14 fully met or exceeded the target. 9 programmes did not recruit at all.

This over all figure does suggest that whilst the reduction of courses is not positive, the target setting is reflecting the actual market for courses at the current time and we would hope this works to consolidate the existing programmes. There is variation in success across programmes against target and there are clearly some that struggle with recruitment in the youth work climate.

4.4 New Student intake – gender

The gender profile of new students – shown in **Figure 10** below – continues the trend of a higher proportion of female students (497) to male (176).

In 2015/16, the proportion of male entrants onto programmes remains fairly static at 26% male and 74% female, an increase of 1% on male students on last year's figures. Youth work had been closer to the general national HEI profile of 55% female and 45% male and this is a move away from that. It is a concern if the profession is not attracting male workers and annual monitoring will want to monitor this closely and consider implications if this trend continues.

Figure 10: Percentage of new students by gender

Total Number of New Students by Gender

Total Number of New Students by Gender
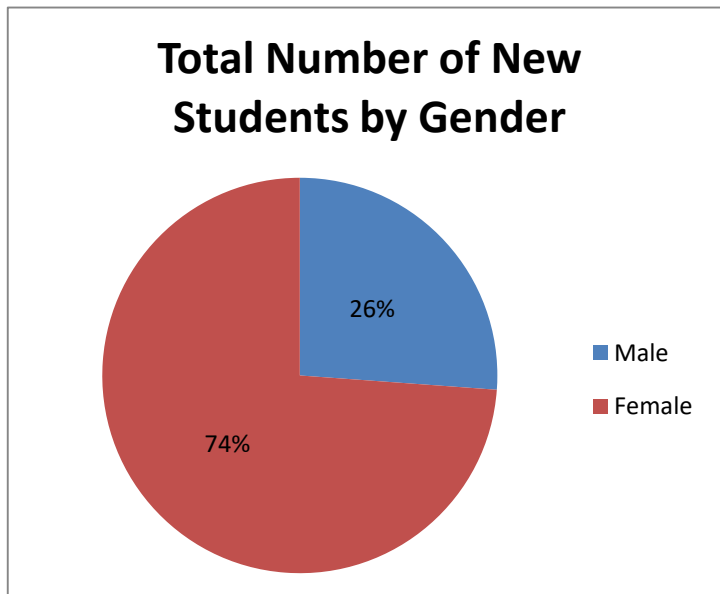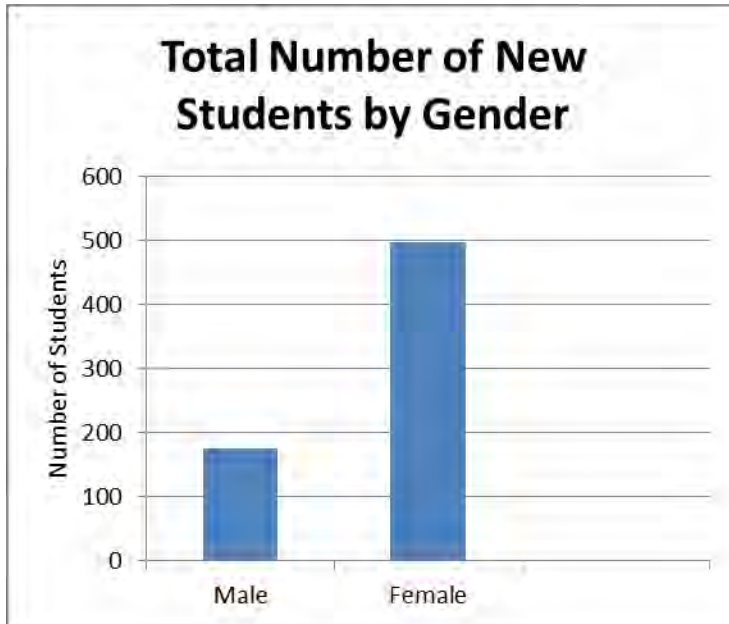
4.5   New student intake – age range

This year's intake is again similar to that of previous years' in the main, seeing an older cohort coming through over the age of 34 years. Whilst students under 21 still make up the largest group, students age 21-24, 25-29 and over 34 are approximately evenly split. Data on age range was received for **667** students, out of a total of 673 students.

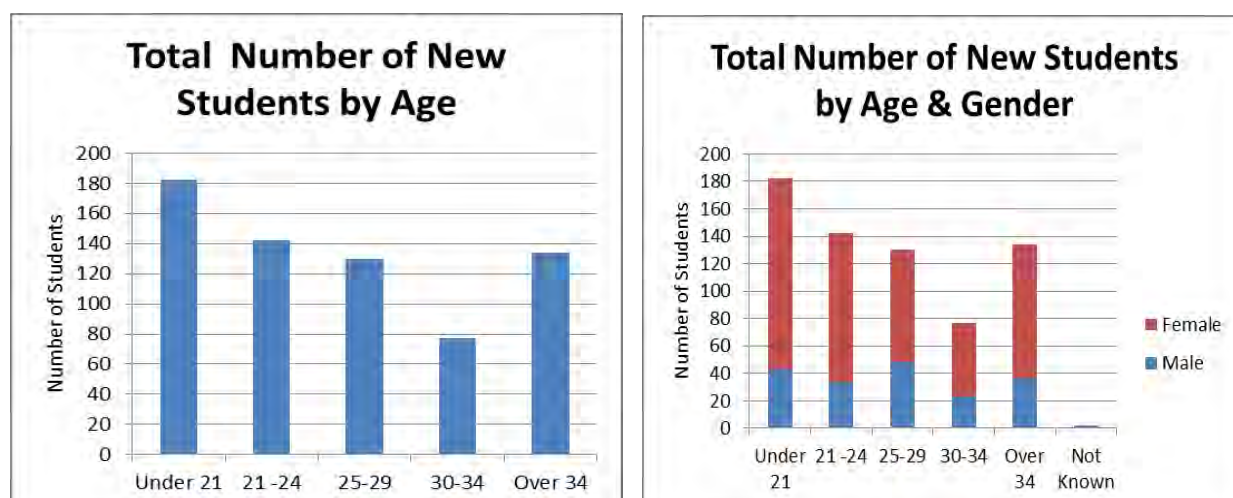**Figure 11: Average Percentage of new students by age**

Figure 12   Age and Gender percentages in cohort

	Male	Female	Total	Total %
Under 21	42	137	179	29
21 -24	30	101	131	21
25-29	40	77	117	19
30-34	22	49	71	11
Over 34	35	85	120	19.5
Not Known	2	0	2	0.5%

4.6   New student intake – ethnicity

Data on ethnicity is collected in accordance with the categories recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality, based on the Census. Information and is requested under sixteen categories of ethnic origin which can be summarised into five main groupings. The full list of sixteen categories is included as Appendix A and the data is summarised under the five broad groupings in **Figure 13**, below. Information on ethnicity was received for new students only. **Data was received on 671 students out of a total of 673 students.**

With regards to ethnicity there has been a significant decrease in the largest category 'white, British, Irish other' from 605 to 436 students, although still accounting for 66% of new students. There was a corresponding increase in the second largest category ('Black or Black British') of students jumping from 13% last year to 19% this year.

Figure 13: New student intake by ethnicity

		2014/15	2015/16
White - British/Irish/Other		605	436
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean/African/Asian/other		29	45
Asian or Asian British - Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi/other		54	45
Black or Black British - Caribbean/African/other		109	124
Chinese		2	1
Other ethnic group		11	14
Not known			6

4.7 New student intake – disability

In 2016 submissions noted that there were 122 students who were identified as having a disability, this accounts for 18% of the overall cohort, with those registered as disabled accounting for 6.5% of those recorded. This represents a slight increase by comparison to 2015 figures. This is clearly a positive reflection on the inclusivity of youth work and brings diversity to cohorts.

4.8 New student intake – qualifications at entry for undergraduate programmes

The data below in **Figures 14 a) and 14 b)** gives qualifications of students at entry to their programmes of study. Undergraduate level courses still favour traditional academic entry routes but A levels have dropped from 31% to 25% this year, whilst Level 4 /BTEC/GNVQ qualifications have remained the same, still now accounting for 22% of entrants. Other changes include a complete drop off of GCSEs from 7% last year to 2.5% now and a substantial increase in the 'Other' category from 7% last year to 18%.
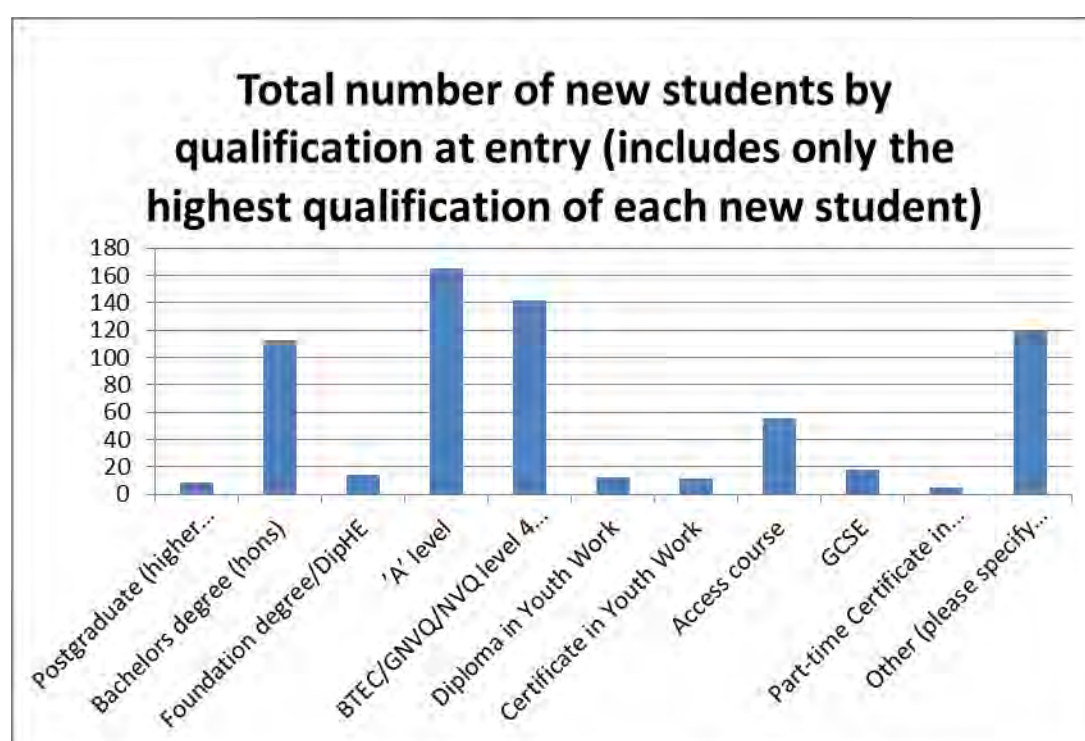
Several HEIs explained that 'Other' was used to include students with professional experience but few or no qualifications. Some also cited non-UK qualifications here, level 2 in social work, NVQ and BTEC at level 3 and students with certificate in education.

Access routes is still at 8%, the same as last year. This may be symptomatic of the changes in local authority services and the perception of youth work as a career, in particular for those already in work settings. This could be discouraging the take up on these courses. It may also reflect an overall reduction in the number of Access Courses on offer through colleges and training providers.

Figure 14 a): Qualification at entry – undergraduate students

Postgraduate (higher degree)	9
Bachelors degree (hons)	113
Foundation degree/DipHE	14
'A' level	165
BTEC/GNVQ/NVQ level 4 or equivalent	142
Diploma in Youth Work	12
Certificate in Youth Work	11
Access course	55
GCSE	18
Part-time Certificate in Youth Work (RAMP)	5
Other	119

Figure 14 b)

Total number of new students by qualification at entry (includes only the highest qualification of each new student)

4.9   Attendance

Figure 15 shows attendance levels in the main reaching the 80% attendance target on full time courses. All percentages are high between 87% for Levels 4 and 5 to 92% for PG students. There has been a significant increase in numbers of attendance since last year, proving that the methods used to engage students seem to have been successful.

The part time figures are impressive, with students' attendance reaching from 91% to 100%.

Figure 15: Percentage of student's attendance

	Full time		Part time	
	80% +	<80%	80% +	<80%
Level 4	91%	9%	100%	0%
Level 5	88%	12%	100%	0%
Level 6	89%	11%	96%	4%
PG	92%	8%	90%	10%

4.10 Retention and completion

Figure 16 below shows the completion and retention rates for 2015/16. Overall the completion and retention for all Levels and Postgraduate students are consistent with previous years.

**Figure 16: Overall percentage of students completing each level**
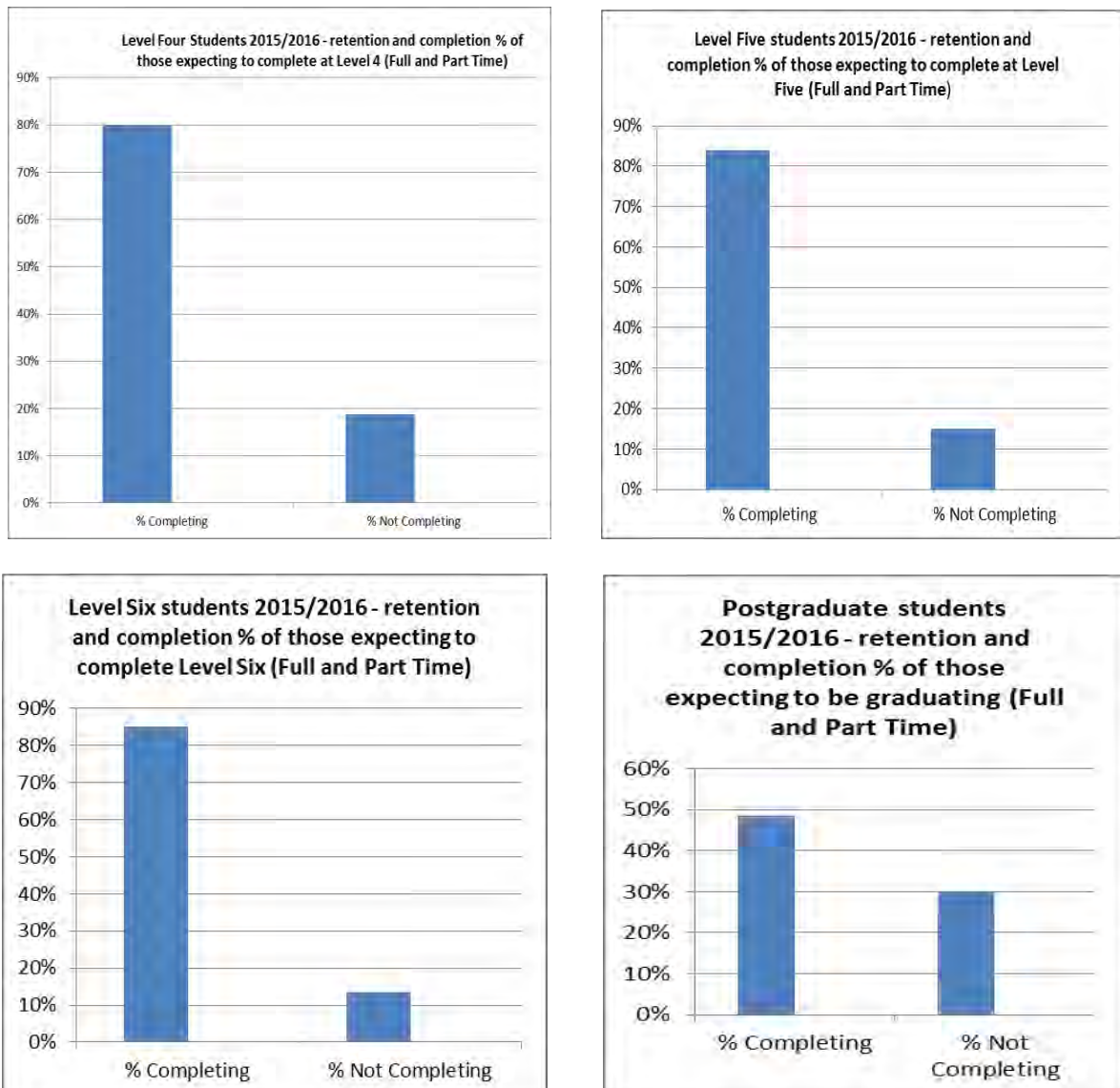
The majority of the comments refer to students who withdrew because of health, personal issues or work commitments, however according to the data this accounts for only 19% of the total number of leavers for Levels 5 and 6. The data indicates that the most important reason for not-completion of the programme in 2015/16 was academic failure.

Finding JNC placements is also cited as a reason that students abandon their study programmes.

	Level 4	**Level 5**	**Level 6**	**PG**
Number completing	417	378	391	81
Number not completing	**98**	**68**	**62**	**50**
Academic Failure	36	13	13	8
Placement Failure	12	3	7	2

The percentage completion rate for Post-Graduate programmes is roughly equal for part time and full time routes.

Figure 17: Reasons for non-completion


17
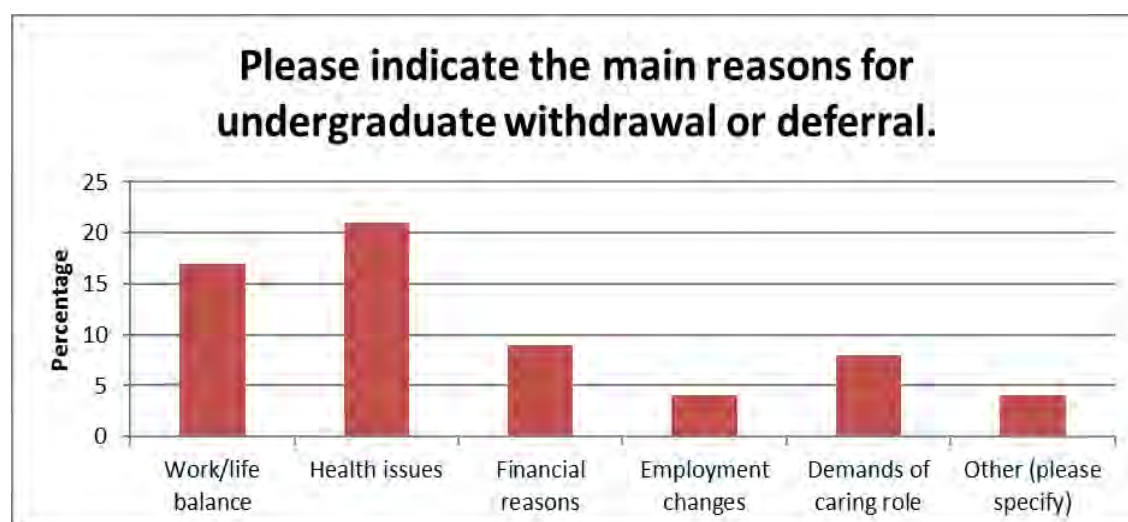
4.11 Destination of graduates

Information on the destination of graduates is incomplete. For 2015/16, destination information was submitted for **639** graduate leavers and **140** postgraduate leavers.

Figure 18 shows students going into statutory youth services continuing to reduce with only 3% going into what is described as local authority youth service in comparison with 8.8% last year – although it is worth noting this could be skewed due to the changing titles of services.

Otherwise it is a mixed picture. Numbers going into voluntary youth sector roles remain fairly strong despite showing a slight decrease from 30% to 23%. There has been a significant decrease in students engaging in further study and BA programmes where numbers have dropped by almost half, although MA programmes show a slight increase.

The general category of employment still stands at 35% which is the highest percentage in this area. Many of the specific categories including statutory sector, grant-funded, housing agencies, schools and community work related are all reported at around 5%. The categories Not Known and Other combined cover a substantial percentage - 15% of the total figure. It would be useful to have more information on the types of employers within this category and the NYA work to explore this in the coming months may help. For next year it is recommended that the categories be reviewed to avoid overlap and take out non-existent options.

Figure 18: a) Recorded destinations Graduate levels
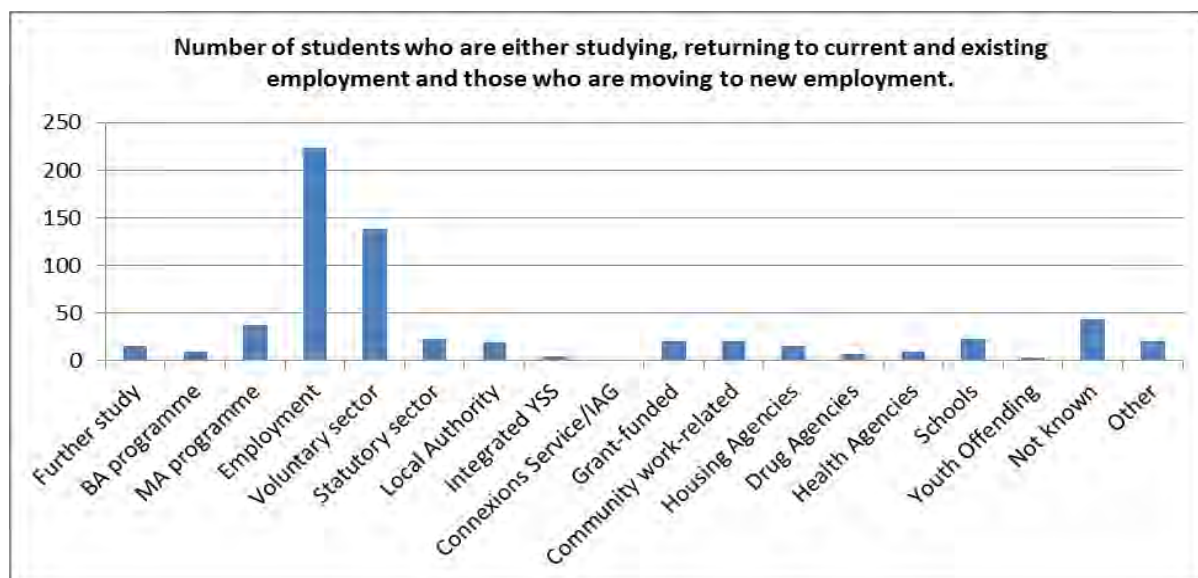
	2014/15	2015/16
Further study	33	16
BA programme	26	10
MA programme	30	38
PhD		0
Employment	230	224
Voluntary sector youth service (full-time/part-time)	193	138
Statutory sector youth service (full-time/part-time)	66	23
Local Authority Service	33	19
Integrated youth support service	15	5
Connexions Service/IAG	5	1
Grant-funded (full-time/part-time) e.g. fixed-term youth work projects	16	21
Community work-related (voluntary/statutory)	29	21
Housing Agencies	6	16
Drugs Agencies	5	7
Health Agencies	4	10
Schools	29	23
Youth Offending Services	10	3
Not known	48	44
Other	12	20

Figure 18 b) Postgraduate
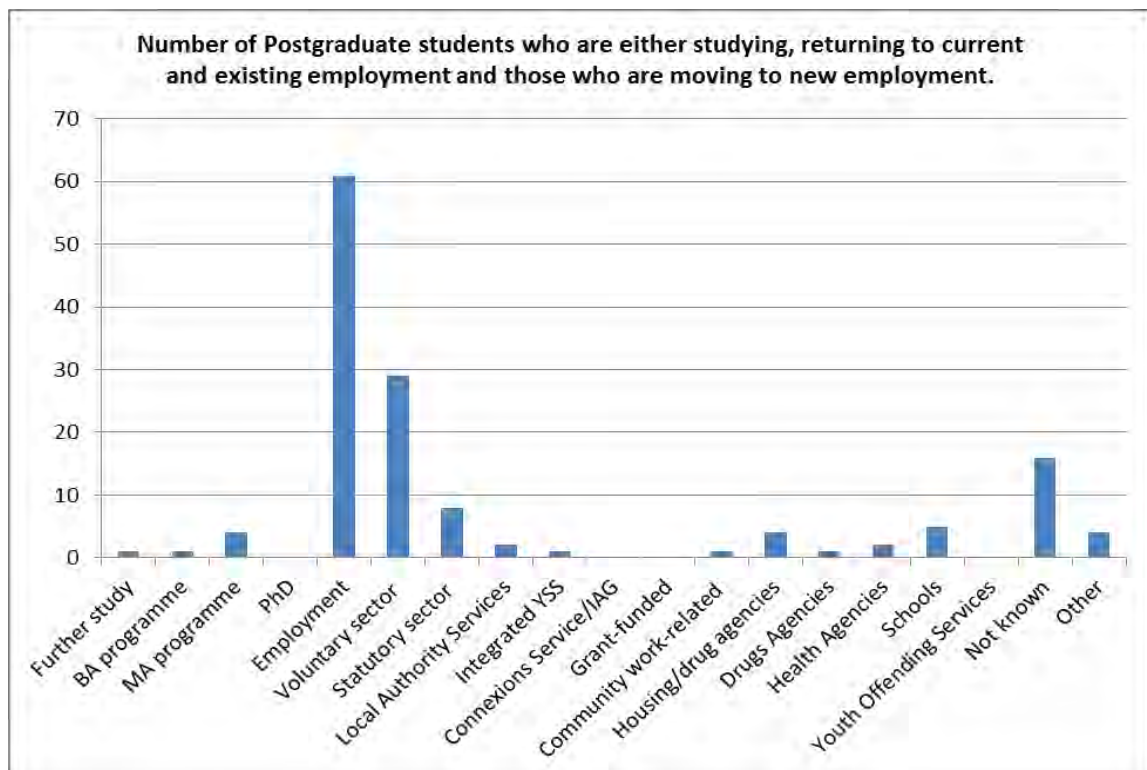
	2014/15	2015/16
	2014/15	2015/16
Further study	0	1
BA programme	0	1
MA programme	6	4
PhD	3	0
Employment	71	61
Voluntary sector youth service (full-time/part-time)	32	29
Statutory sector youth service (full-time/part-time)	25	8
Local Authority Services	8	2
Integrated youth support service	2	1
Connexions Service/IAG	4	0
Grant-funded (full-time/part-time) e.g. fixed-term youth work projects	4	0
Community work-related (voluntary/statutory)	4	1
Housing Agencies	2	4
Drugs Agencies	1	1
Health Agencies	3	2
Schools	4	5
Youth Offending Services	3	0
Not known	5	16
Other	3	4

Postgraduate destinations indicate a similarly mixed picture to graduates'. Voluntary sector youth service is stable, showing an increase on last year's numbers. Again, the category Not Known is showing a substantial increase. Like graduate destinations, statutory indicates a decline on last year's figures.

4.12 Quality Assurance and qualitative evidence

The questionnaire asked programmes to confirm whether the main quality assurance processes have been carried out for this annual monitoring period. The returns indicated that a majority of programmes have managed to provide an overview of either the academic and field external examiner reports or at least one of the two. There were 4 programmes that submitted an incomplete survey, 2 who did not complete their field external examiner report and 2 who has not completed their academic report, all of them due to external issues and delays.

There was little narrative data inputted in respect of this question. However, there were detailed comments, data and input on other aspects provided, some positive comments/feedback in relation to external examiner comments and programme leaders.

These showed high levels of good practice across all aspects of programmes most notably the teaching and assessment, strong theory to practice and supportive and helpful feedback to students.

Some programmes also noted that they have retained strong field links with good employer engagement. **One quote shared "local** organisations and agencies still say they need and value youth work input and our students add **great value in their placements". One respondent also noted that it is "not always labelled youth work but there are opportunities out there".**

One programme made specific reference to the value that the joint ESB validation had brought saying this had positively impacted on student recruitment and retention and extended the scope of professional practice placements.

4.13 Views on areas of development, overall progress and challenges to the sector

As to be expected in the current landscape, there are a number of challenges being faced by universities that are referenced across respondents.

The national policy that impacts on youth work remains uncertain as does any future funding. Many reflect on the changing nature of youth work and the organisations that are employing them and the general point that there are simply less opportunities currently.

This has impacted on recruitment and it continues to be a struggle for some HEIs to meet numbers. Aligned to this are the changes within HEIs; the pressures on programmes to drive efficiencies and this puts a pressure on youth work programmes to demonstrate their value and viability. This is clearly reflecting what ETS has seen over the last few years in terms of programme closures.

Students themselves are clearly concerned about their employment opportunities and there was some reflection on the poor profile of Youth Work as a profession and the fact that in new environments, JNC is not widely understood. One respondent questioned the relevance of JNC in today's landscape.

This changing nature and location of youth work is challenging for programmes as this has resulted in a shortage/difficulty in locating placements, securing suitably qualified supervisors and reduced employment opportunities for students. There is also reflection on the fact that placement agencies continue to go through reorganisation and this climate of change can be very unsettling for students during their studies.

5.0   Issues to be addressed by the ETS Committee, and through validation working groups, as a result of the annual monitoring 2015/16

The narrative from HEIs does support the planned work of ETS; the need to be future proofing programmes – how will we ensure they are fit for purpose and preparing students for their roles in a range of multi-disiplinary, non traditional environments whilst retaining the value of youth work as a distinct professional approach. There is recognition for the need for employer research and a clearer understanding of these new employment routes and in light of this an overhaul of the qualifications and curriculum to prepare youth workers for a variety of working contexts and roles.

The ETS committee has a critical role to play in promoting and improving understanding around the professional qualification framework to emerging organisations delivering youth work contracts in the sector.

Employers and employees should be supported to see the benefits of professional training and pathways extended to encourage progression from level 2 through to level 6/7. This could be supported by increasing understanding around student finance and routes to professional development in the voluntary sector.

As highlighted in last year's report, there is a clear role for ETS and NYA to continue to champion professional qualifications and professional placements, to extend this to include better marketing about what Youth Work is and how Youth Workers work with young people and the skills needed in the changing landscape youth workers will find themselves working in.

This awareness raising should support the relevance of JNC as a mark of quality training that employers can have confidence in. It should also aim to increase the need across the field for engagement with HEI programmes in terms of supporting them to prepare students for their next steps and extend the links to organisations that can support placements and supervision.

As referenced in the report there are areas that need revision to help develop a clearer picture of destinations and qualification entry levels that can be amended ahead of Annual Monitoring circulation next year.

In addition ETS should keep a close watch on the gender split across programmes as this has shown a significant dip in male students. This could have longer term implications to maintaining a balanced workforce.

Appendix A – Ethnic origin categories

White

- □   British
- □   Irish
- □   Any other White background, please write in _____

Mixed

- □   White and Black Caribbean
- □   White and Black African
- □   White and Asian
- □   Any other Mixed background, please write in _____

Asian or Asian British

- □   Indian
- □   Pakistani
- □   Bangladeshi
- □   Any other Asian background, please write in _____

Black or Black British

- □   Caribbean
- □   African
- □   Any other Black background, please write in _____

Chinese or other ethnic group

- □   Chinese
- □   Other ethnic group, please write in _____

**National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ**

Tel: 0116 242 7350

Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk
Twitter: @natyouthagency
Facebook: nationalyouthagency

For more information, visit **www.nya.org.uk**