



# **Annual Monitoring of Youth and Community Work Programmes 2016/2017**

Professionally validated by the National Youth Agency



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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 within this document and is available on the NYA website at [www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk).

This report outlines the findings of the annual review of professionally validated programmes – 2016/17, for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

NYA is the recognised PSRB body for Youth Work programmes in England. The overall procedure for validations comes within the purview of the NYA's Education Training Standards Committee (ETS). Annual Monitoring is an annual requirement for Higher Education Institutes to maintain JNC status for youth work programmes.

The annual monitoring process requests statistical data and qualitative information, captured through an online pro forma. The data contains valuable evidence, which collectively informs this Annual Monitoring report.

The Higher Education Institutes (HEI's) have the main responsibility for the monitoring and quality assurance of the programmes. However, the NYA monitors individual programmes through the Annual Monitoring return data 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 programmes are 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.
- To inform wider workforce development planning for the youth work sector.

**(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.

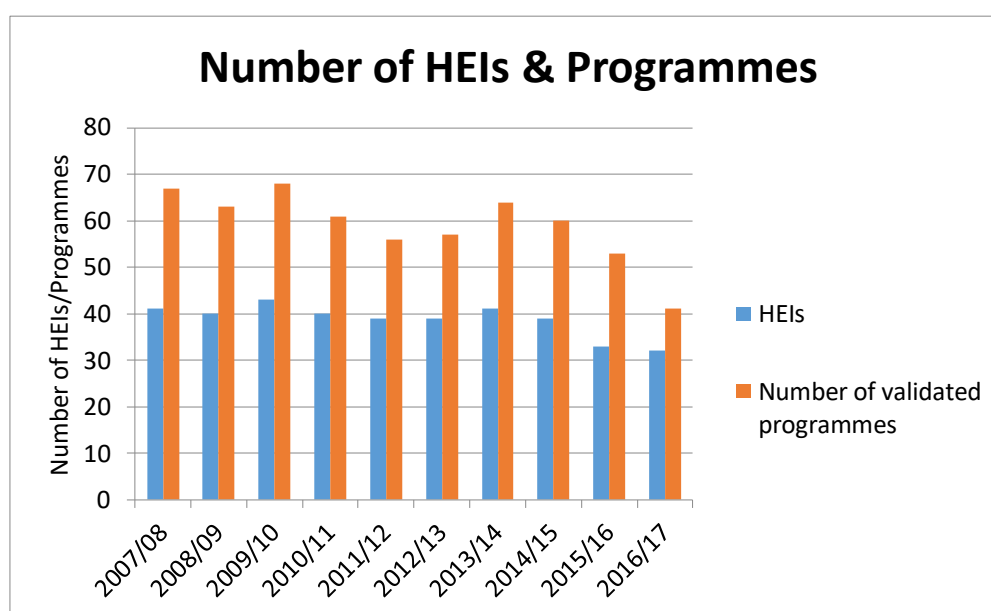
The collection of quantitative data is not perfect, with some HEI's still not providing all information for all students in a consistent way across programmes. This means that there are different totals for data on different categories – for example; attendance ratios do not match recruitment totals. 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 2016/17

Pro-formas were disseminated to **32** institutions offering 40 programmes, with a request for completed forms to be returned by January 2018. 1 institution did not respond to the request.

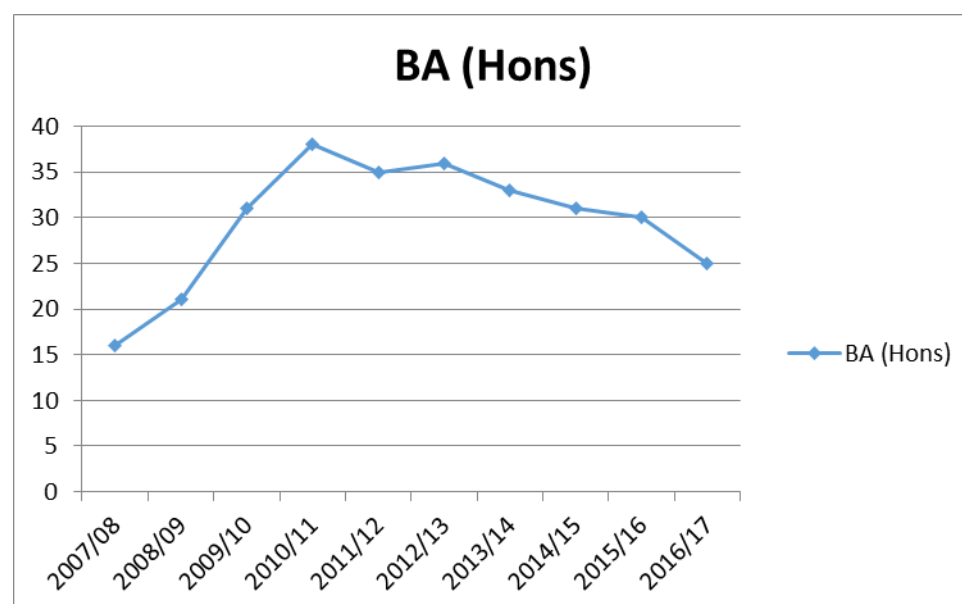
The returns showed that in the year in question there were **0** new courses and 8 had been withdrawn. The returns provide data for 39 validated programmes across 32 participating HEIs. Despite the response rate therefore being 98%, both figures are record lows, as depicted in the graphic Figure 1.

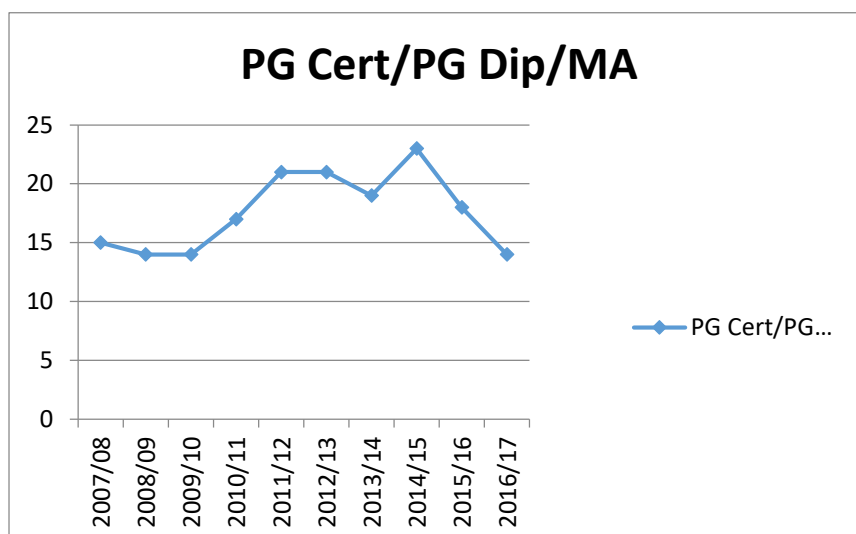
**Figure 1: Number of Programmes and HEIs**



From here on, only the data retrieved from the 39 programme submissions is considered within the report.

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





The charts above show a continued decrease in the number of validated BA (Hons) programmes to 25 programmes being delivered. Postgraduate programmes have decreased more steeply, bringing their total down to 14 this year.

1 institution 'rested' their BA (Hons) programme for 2016/17, and 1 had no uptake for their post graduate course. The institute that did not respond only ran 1 BA course.

### Figure 3: Regional view

The regional analysis of HEIs enables a picture to be presented of the location of youth work programmes.

Despite the decrease in number of programmes offered, there is still at least 1 undergraduate course in each region. Yorkshire & Humberside and the East Midlands retain the largest share of programmes nationally.

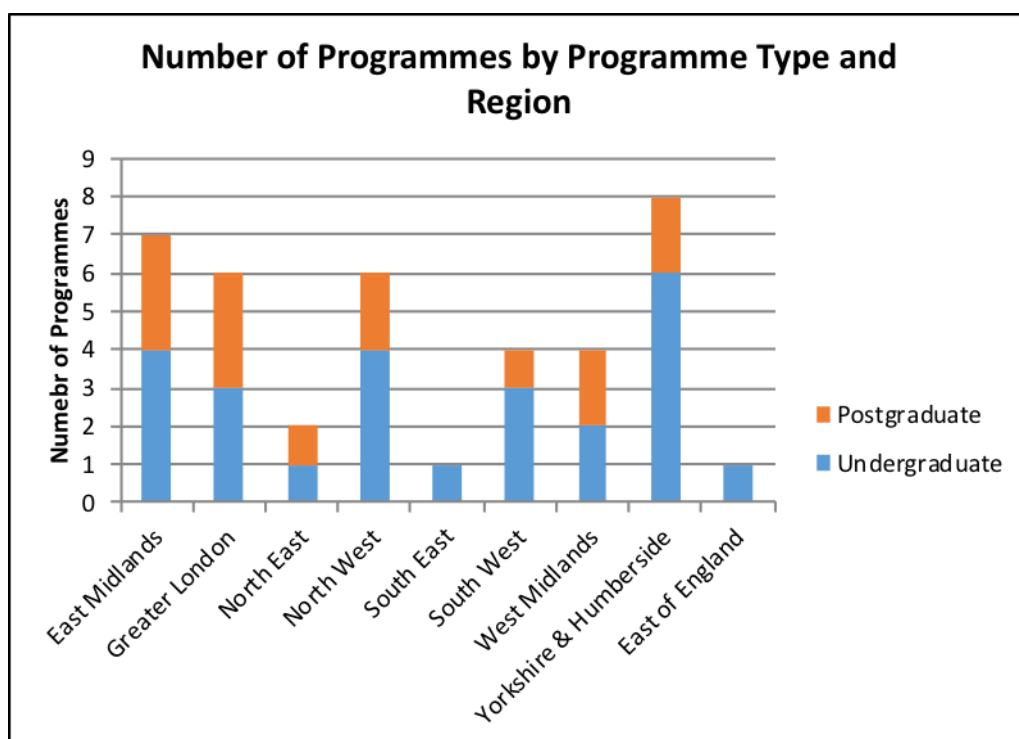
There has also been a larger reduction in postgraduate courses, meaning that some regions now do not offer any, a cause for concern.

As a caveat; the figures relate to the geographical base for the programme. One distance learning provider is based in the South East and may have cohorts of students studying in other regions and this should be considered when reviewing numbers.

	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total
East Midlands	4	3	7
Greater London	3	3	6
North East	1	1	2
North West	4	2	6

South East	1	0	1
South West	3	1	4
West Midlands	2	2	4
Yorkshire & Humberside	6	2	8
East of England	1	0	1
	25	14	39
	65%	35%	%

includes OU



## 4.0 Analysis of Data

### 4.1 Core Staffing

The numbers of Core staff delivering programmes across the board has decreased over the past year. However, this is to be expected given that the number of programmes has reduced, and in turn the number of students.

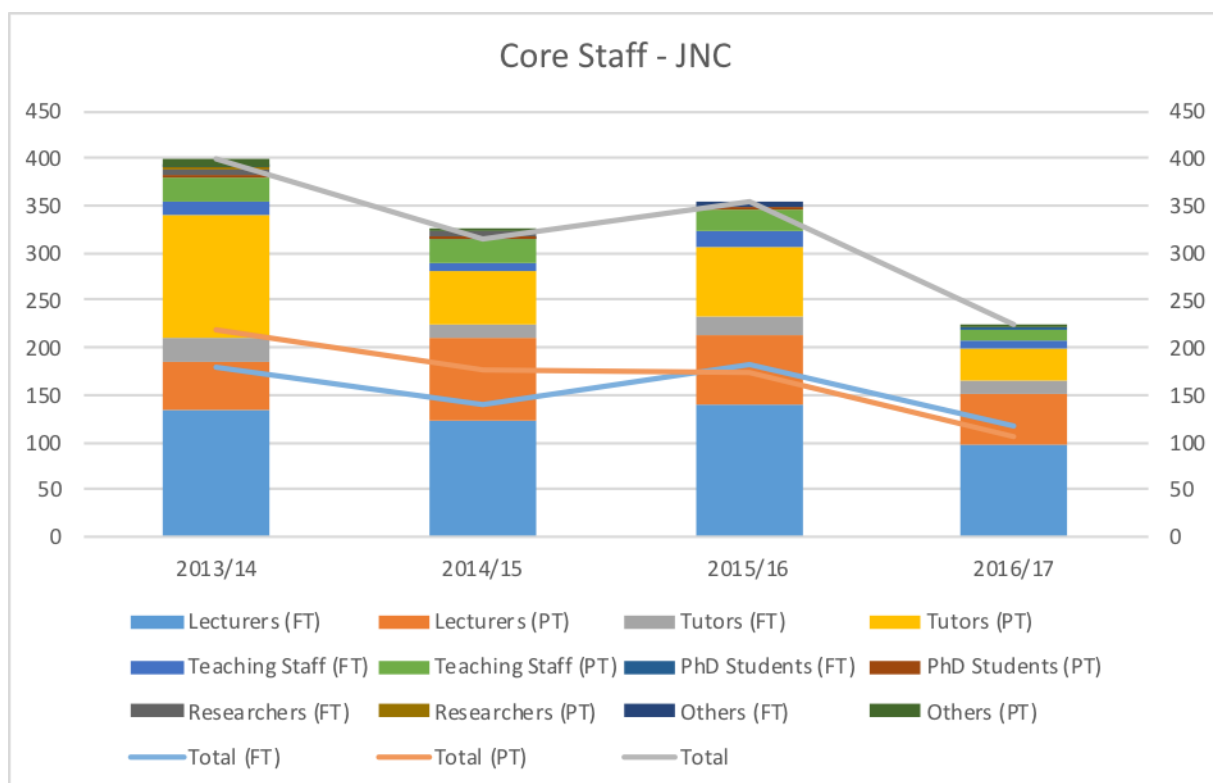
It may also be an expected reaction to the findings of last year, when the amount of programmes offered dropped, but staff numbers rose.

The proportion of JNC staff has remained broadly similar for the past 3 years at near 70%, but there has been a slight increase in the proportion of full time staff, from 48% in 2014/15, to 52% in 2015/16, to 55% in 2016/17.

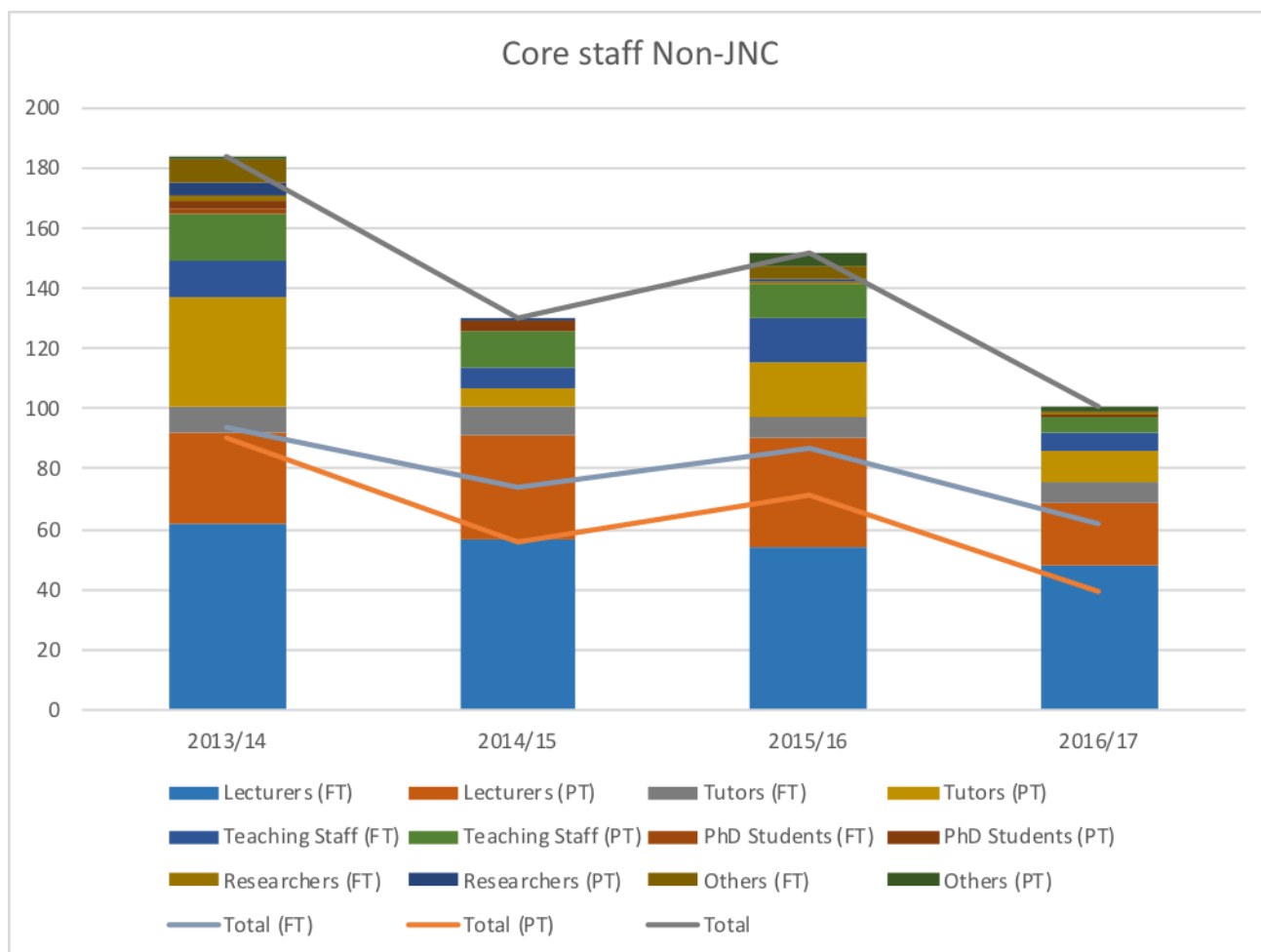
**Figure 4 - Staffing Breakdown**

2015/16		2016/17
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53 PROGRAMMES									39 PROGRAMMES			
Core Staff Contributions - JNC	F/T	P/T	Total			F/T	P/T	Total				
Lecturers	141	73	214			97	55	152				
Tutor	19	72	91			12	36	48				
Teaching Staff	17	25	42			8	12	20				
PhD Students	0	3	3			1	0	1				
Researchers	0	0	0			0	0	0				
Other	4	0	4			0	3	3				
	181	173	354			118	106	224				
Core Staff Contributions - Non JNC	F/T	P/T	Total			F/T	P/T	Total				
Lecturers	54	36	90			48	21	69				
Tutor	7	18	25			7	10	17				
Teaching Staff	15	11	26			6	5	11				
PhD Students	0	0	0			0	1	1				
Researchers	1	1	2			1	0	1				
Other	4	5	9			0	2	2				
	81	71	152			62	39	101				







The number of visiting external lecturers has dropped along with the reduction in programmes.

The numbers of lecturers used has seen a decline for the third year in a row, with those who were accounted for teaching across more courses.

**Figure 6**

	2015/16	2016/2017
Visiting External Lecturers	253	178
Shared Internal Lecturers	76	63

## 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 below:

**Figure 7: a) Average numbers of placements and supervisors**

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Placements	43	45	42	40	36	25	30
Supervisors	43	43	38	34	31	26	29

**b) Actual Numbers of Agencies and Supervisors Used**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Placements	1549	1347	1187
Supervisors	1765	1405	1132

The average number of placements has somewhat recovered following the drop in 2015/16. Whilst promising, there are still many institutions who voiced this area as a cause for concern (see 4.13). This is mainly attributed to the cutbacks experienced in local government, geographical proximity of relevant placements, and to the fact that youth work is increasingly being delivered in non-traditional settings; e.g. in health care services and youth offending environments.

**Figure 8** (below) shows the average percentage of supervisors with JNC qualifications. Evident is a continued stabilisation around the 70% mark following the drop to 61% in 2014/15. This is encouraging and shows that, where possible, HEIs are making positive steps in ensuring students have access to JNC qualified supervision despite changing circumstances and the challenges this has brought. (See 4.13)

**Figure 8: Average percentage of supervisors with JNC qualifications**

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
% of Qualified Supervisors	72	67	74	76	61	69	70

## 4.3 Recruitment and student numbers

The target total for student recruitment onto professionally validated programmes this year was **566**, the actual recruitment number was **456**, a significant decrease in the student cohort on last year.

**Figure 9: Recruitment to programmes (student numbers)**

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Actual	1277	1135	951	825	701	793	673	456
Target	1214	1152	1013	1037	811	847	694	566
%of target achieved	105%	99%	94%	80%	86%	93.6%	97%	81%

Of the 39 responding programmes:

- 9 provided no data due to discontinued course offerings.
- 2 provided no recruitment data for unknown reasons.
- 7 programmes met or exceeded their recruitment targets
- 21 programmes did not meet their target.

The targets have reflected the data available and does not include targets for those institutions for which no data was received.

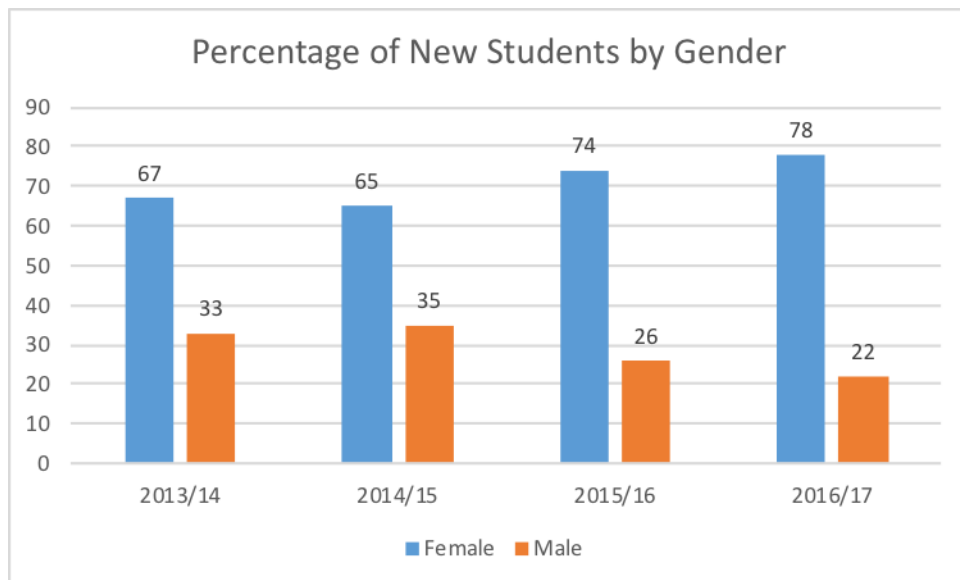
The results imply that there is a lessened demand for youth work courses, and that the supply has accordingly dropped. It is beyond the scope of this report to suggest why this may be, although some suggestions are offered in commentary in 4.12 and 4.13.

#### **4.4 New Student intake – gender**

The gender profile of new students continues to show a high proportion (78%) of female students enrolling, 355 to 101 male. This continues the trend of the last 3 years, in which the split has grown progressively wider.

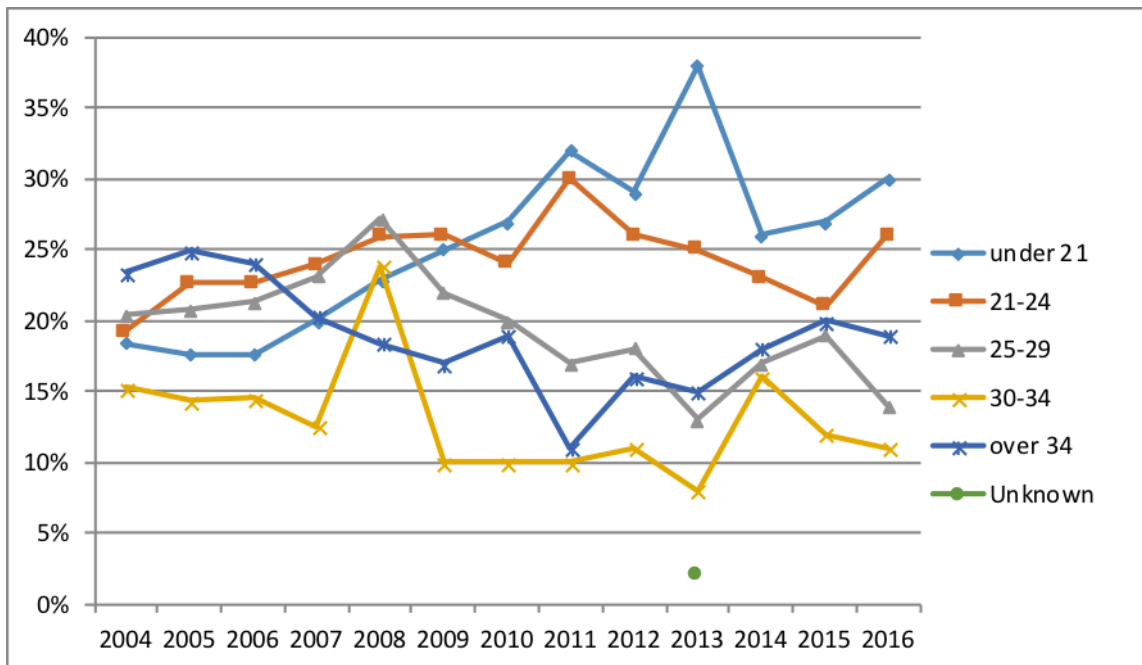
It is therefore not only a concern that the profession is not attracting more workers, but also that fewer males are seemingly attracted to the sector.

**Figure 10: Percentage of new students by gender**

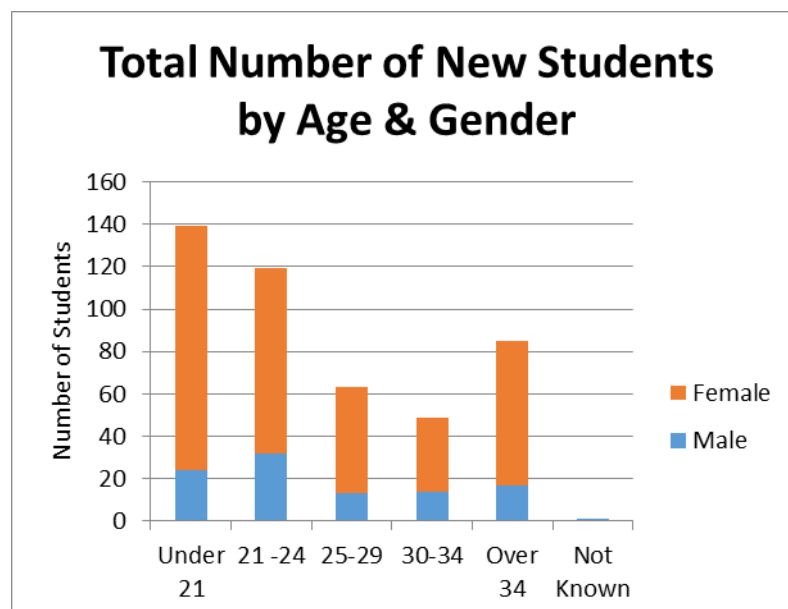


#### 4.5 New student intake – age range

This year's intake reflects that of previous years' in that students under 21 make up the largest group, followed closely by those aged 21 – 24, with decreasing intake until those aged 34 and over are considered. However, there has been a marked drop in the intake of students aged 25-29 this year. This has again polarised the profession into 2 major groups - those aged 24 and under, and those above - continuing a broad trend evident since 2004, but which was most marked in 2011-13, as shown below.



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



**Figure 12 Age and Gender percentages in cohort**

	Male	Female	Total	Total %
Under 21	24	115	139	30%
21 -24	32	87	119	26%
25-29	13	50	63	14%
30-34	14	35	49	11%
Over 34	17	68	85	19%
Not Known	1	0	1	0%

#### 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 is requested under sixteen categories of ethnic origin which can be summarised into seven main groupings. The full list of sixteen categories is included as Appendix A and the data is summarised under the seven broad groupings in **Figure 13**. Information on ethnicity was received for new students only. **Data was received on 301 students.**

With regards to ethnicity there has been a significant decrease in the largest category 'white, British, Irish other' from 436 to 272 students, although this still accounts for 60% of new students, it has gone down from 65% in 2015/16, and c. 75% in 2014/15. This is a positive aspect showing the sector is ahead of population trends in recruiting BAME youth workers.

**Figure 13: New student intake by ethnicity**

	2015/16	2016/17	% difference
White - British/Irish/Gypsy/Other	436	272	-5.1
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean/African/Asian/other	45	38	1.6
Asian or Asian British - Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi/other	45	50	4.3
Black or Black British - Caribbean/African/other	124	90	1.3
Chinese	1	0	-0.1
Arab	-	0	-
Any other ethnic group	14	6	-0.8
Not known	8		-1.2
Total	673	456	n/a

#### 4.7 New student intake – disability

The 2017 submissions showed that there were 94 students who were identified as having a disability, this accounts for 20% of the overall cohort. Of these, 14 were registered as having a disability. This represents a slight increase in comparison to 2016 figures.

Despite the reduction in overall student numbers, and reduction in the proportion of male students, it is therefore evident that there is otherwise increasing inclusivity and diversity in the cohorts.

#### 4.8 New student intake – qualifications at entry

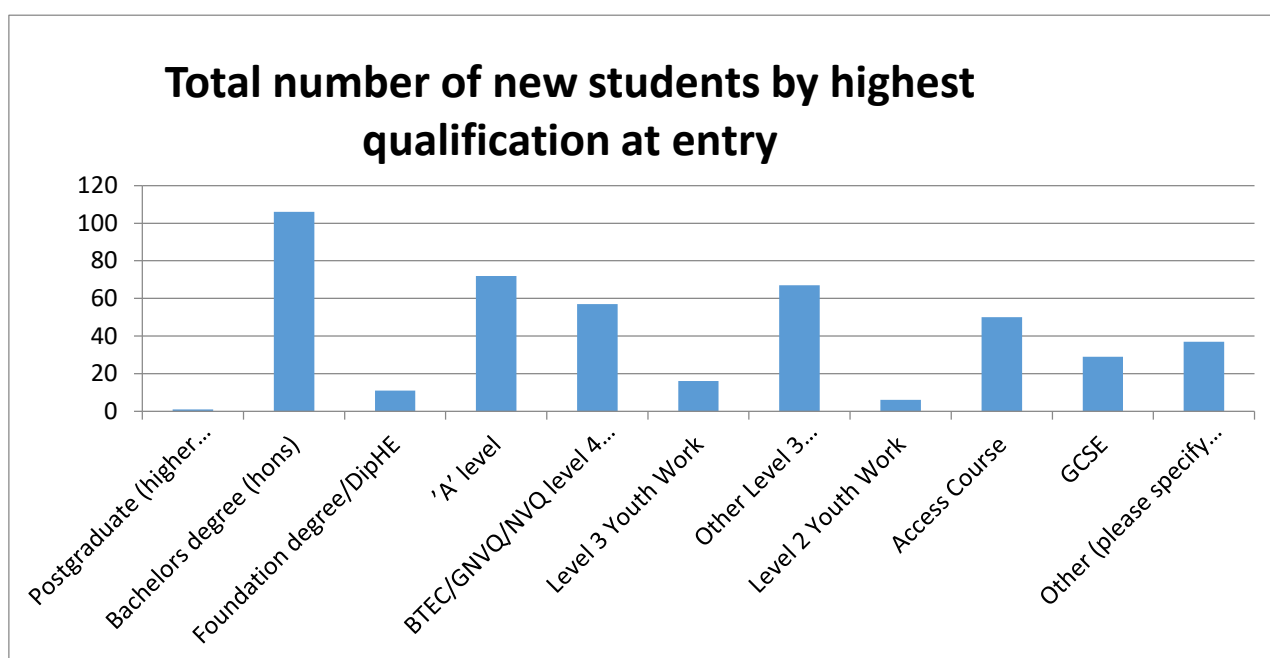
The data below in **Figures 14 a) and 14 b)** shows the highest level of qualification achieved by students at entry to their programmes of study. The proportion of those entering via A levels has dropped again to 15% this year (down from 25% and 30% in previous years).

Whilst this has been resulted in a proportional rise across all other areas, it is suggesting that youth work is not a favoured route for those finishing A-levels and considering further or more specialised study.

**Figure 14 a): Qualification at entry – undergraduate students**

Postgraduate (higher degree)	1
Bachelors degree (hons)	106
Foundation degree/DipHE	11
'A' level	72
BTEC/GNVQ/NVQ level 4 or equivalent	57
Level 3 Youth Work	16
Other Level 3 Qualification	67
Level 2 Youth Work	6
Access Course	50
GCSE	29
Other	37
Unspecified	4
Total	456

**Figure 14 b)**



## 4.9 Attendance

**Figure 15** shows that 80% of student's attendance levels are still reaching the 80% attendance target on full time courses.

However, despite a slight rise in the attendance levels of full time level 5 and 6 students, the attendance of both full time postgraduate and Level 4 students are down 10%. The part time figures remain strong despite a slight drop in the attendance of part time postgraduate students, down 3 points to 87%.

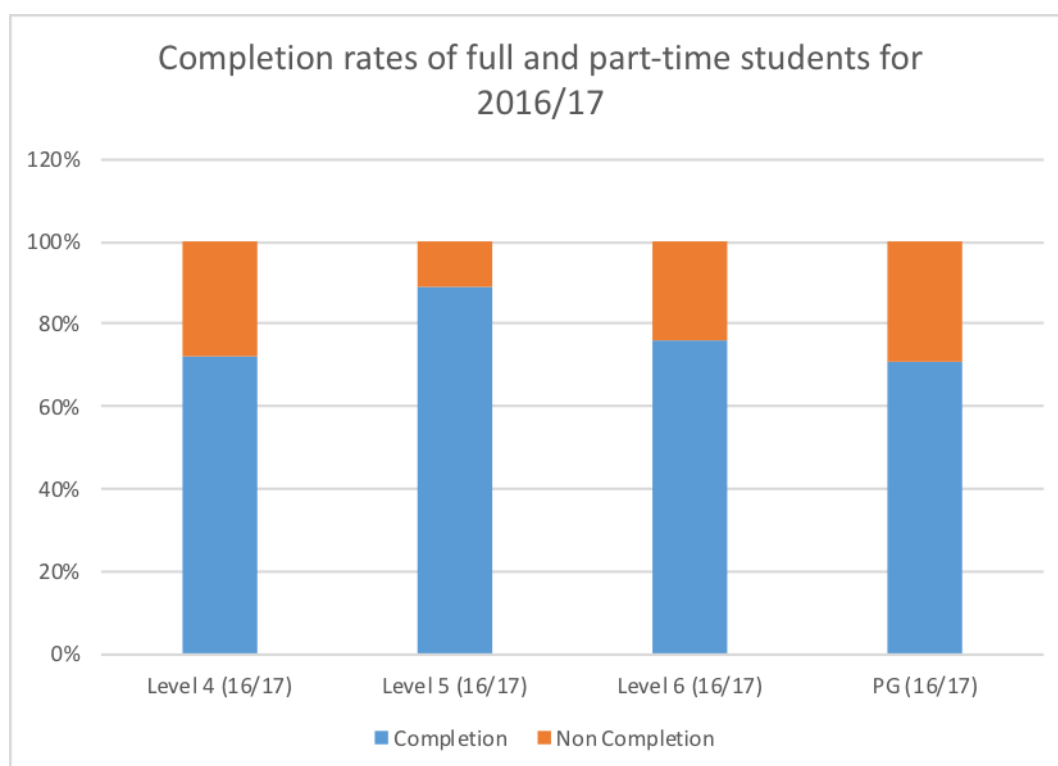
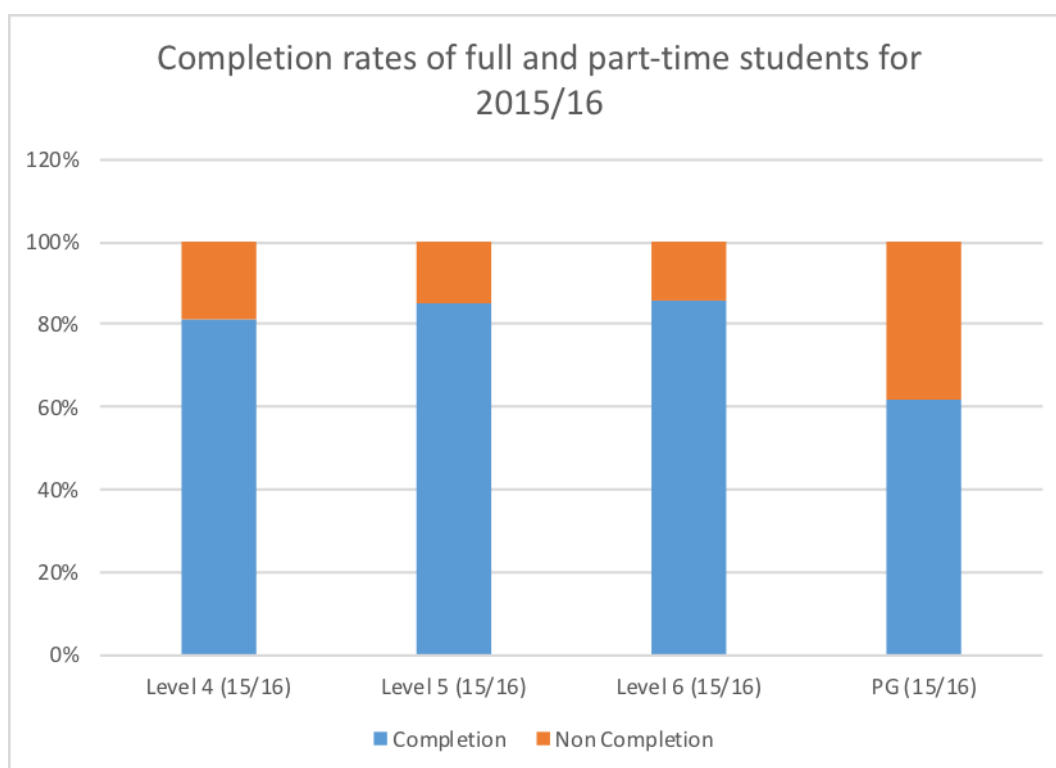
**Figure 15: Percentage of student's attendance**

	Full time		Part time	
	80% +	<80%	80% +	<80%
<b>Level 4</b>	81%	19%	99%	1%
<b>Level 5</b>	92%	8%	99%	1%
<b>Level 6</b>	91%	9%	97%	3%
<b>PG</b>	82%	18%	87%	13%

## 4.10 Retention and completion

**Figure 16** 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**

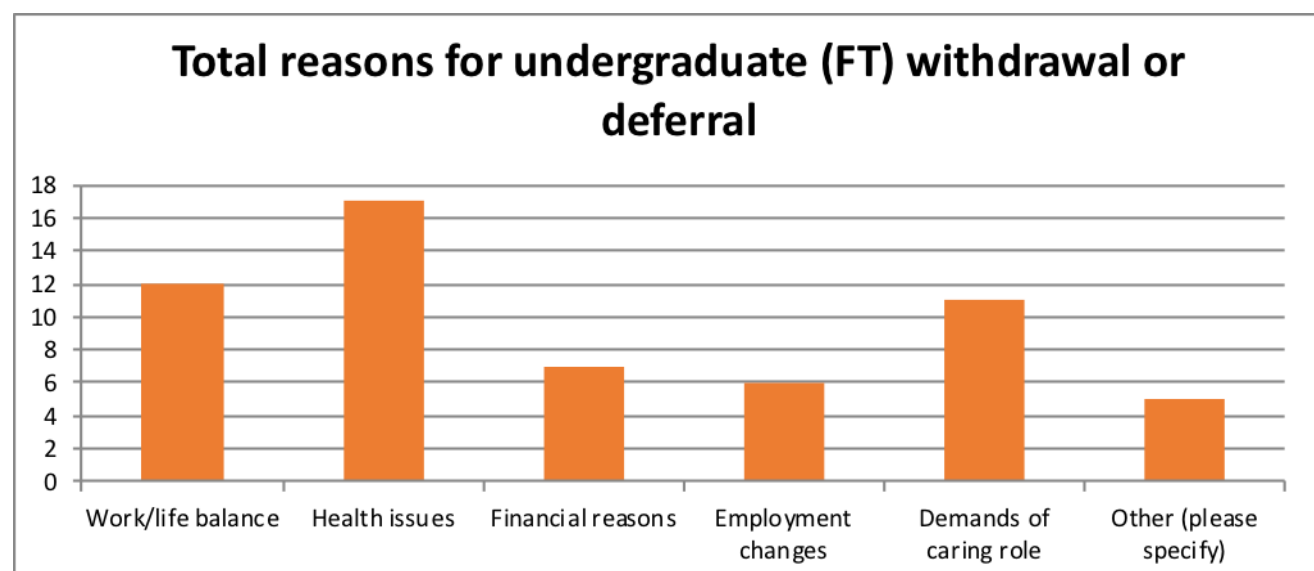




It is clear that completion levels are varied to last year, with positive swings in expected completion rates for both Level 5 and postgraduate students, but dips in rates for Level 4 and 6 students.

	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Level 6</b>	<b>PG</b>
<b>Number completing</b>	339	362	273	93
<b>Number not completing</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>38</b>
<b><i>Field Work Failure</i></b>	5	3	10	2
<b><i>Study Failure</i></b>	33	16	9	7
<b><i>Deferral</i></b>	20	11	39	11
<b><i>Withdrawal</i></b>	55	13	27	20
<b><i>Transfer to another course</i></b>	17	3	3	1

**Figure 17: Reasons for non-completion**



There were a variety of reasons given for non-completion, with the most common relating to health and work/life balance being adversely affected.

For those students who did not complete this year, but who intend to return to their studies, securing the funding or being offered paid work was a key factor; also mentioned was course suitability, with some students unable to currently match the academic requirements (this could reflect the fact that a reduced number of students have completed A-Level studies prior to the course and thus were underprepared for the academic rigour needed.)

#### **4.11 Destination of graduates**

It is very difficult to compare the destination of graduates with previous years as the data returned for this was highly incomplete, with 52% of all respondents skipping the question for undergraduates, and 67.5% of respondents skipping the question for postgraduates (although in mitigation it is likely that many institutions had no postgraduates, and others do not record this information).

This latter assertion is reflected in some of the comments, which show that where students have either not remained in the sector or in some kind of contact with the institution the recording of destinations has been problematic. For instance;

*"We are unable to maintain a database with this level of detail, as many of our recent graduates have either discontinued contact with us, or moved onto different jobs without notifying us of the change"*

*5 institutions replied with "unknown" destinations*

*One of the largest providers stated that they, "do not currently provide robust leaver/destination data due to volume and the multiple study pathways available to students"*

It is therefore highly likely that the low number of graduates known to be moving into non-sector employment can be partially accounted for. Firstly, because only 52% of institutions responded to this questions, and secondly, as 33% of those who responded have implied they 'don't know' where graduates have gone, including some of the larger institutions. It adds to the challenge for the sector in being able to provide a clear picture on where professional youth workers are employed.

Nevertheless, destinations show a broad similarity to other years when reduced leaver numbers are accounted for.

*\*please note that categories were amended for the survey 2016/17. Previous categories have also been listed this year to show comparison. Highlighted in green are the amended categories, the others will become obsolete.*

**Figure 18: a) Recorded destinations Graduate levels**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Further study	33	16	8
BA programme	26	10	27
MA programme	30	38	20
PhD		0	0
Employment (non youth & community)	230	224	4
Unemployed	n/a	n/a	2
Voluntary youth sector	193	138	133
Statutory sector youth service (full-time/part-time)	66	23	
Youth Justice Sector	n/a	n/a	11
Local Authority Youth Service	33	19	17
Local Authority Targeted Youth Support	n/a	n/a	13
Local Authority Other	n/a	n/a	5
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	
Voluntary community development	29	21	14
Housing Agencies	6	16	12
Drugs Agencies	5	7	0
Health Agencies	4	10	4
Schools	29	23	13
Social Enterprise / Self-employed	n/a	n/a	2
Youth Offending Services	10	3	
Not known	48	44	
Other	12	20	16

**Figure 18: b) Postgraduate**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Further study	0	1	2
BA programme	0	1	0
MA programme	6	4	1
PhD	3	0	n/a
Employment (non youth & community)	71	61	2
Social Enterprise / Self-employed	n/a	n/a	1
Unemployed	n/a	n/a	2
Voluntary youth sector	32	29	27
Statutory sector youth service (full-time/part-time)	25	8	
Local Authority Youth Service	8	2	13

Local Authority Targeted Youth Support	n/a	n/a	4
Local Authority Other	n/a	n/a	2
Integrated youth support service	2	1	n/a
Connexions Service/IAG	4	0	n/a
Grant-funded (full-time/part-time) e.g. fixed-term youth work projects	4	0	n/a
Voluntary community development	4	1	3
Housing Agencies	2	4	1
Drugs Agencies	1	1	0
Health Agencies	3	2	2
Schools	4	5	3
Youth Offending Services	3	0	
Youth Justice Sector	n/a	n/a	2
Not known	5	16	
Other	3	4	5

## 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 90% of programmes have managed to provide an overview of either the academic and field external examiner reports or at least one of the two.

5 institutions did not give reasons for lack of reports, whilst 2 had outstanding reports; one due to ill health of the examiner, and one due to delayed paperwork.

Comments with regard to external examiner reports showed high levels of good practice across all aspects of programmes; most notably in the strong connections between theory and practice, as well as high academic standards as a whole. Several commented positively on the fact that the courses were continuing to show good understanding of the current political context, and had changed content to reflect this.

As a whole, continuous improvement of the courses was recognised, although there were isolated concerns surrounding marking standards and attention to standards of students' writing ability.

The stated strengths of the courses were, as expected varied, with most stressing strong local links to relevant youth organisations, and a few stressing their international presence.

A large majority of courses were confident in both their 'range' of content material and assessment methods, as well as their quality of teaching.

One programme made specific reference to the value that the joint ESB validation had brought saying this allowed a more flexible approach to ensuring that staff were addressing student needs.

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

One of the trends that is most evident from respondents is that it is becoming increasingly difficult to match students to good placements for various reasons including; geography, lack of open youth work, closure of services, and general lack of available potential placements.

Where placements were found, there were also some issues noted including the fact that 'fewer line managers ... have an understanding of a pure youth work approach'. Alongside this there were concerns voiced over the adequacy of learning environments in some placements, as well as a lack of JNC qualified supervisors in others.

This suggests that shifts within services are affecting the suitability of relevant 'theory' to the 'practice' learning being supported.

As borne out in figures above, recruitment remains a cause for concern; of those who voiced these concerns there was a consensus which suggested that funding cuts had lent to fewer career prospects being available for youth workers, which was a deterrent for recruitment. This in turn has seen institutions put pressure on remaining courses to prove their 'value for money'

Solutions that were offered to rectify this included the following;

- one institution who altered their course timetables to better accommodate students from further afield by having 'long block days' instead of more fragmented teaching hours,
- another institution suggested that careers advisors and local authorities should be urged to stress the viability of youth work as a career option,
- redevelopment and re-validation of courses to ensure the most relevant practices were offered,
- ensuring that youth work qualifications were recognised as valuable in other sectors, allowing for more career options to be opened through taking a youth work course.

#### **5.0 Issues to be addressed by the ETS Committee, and through validation working groups, as a result of the annual monitoring 2016/17**

As in previous years reports, the challenges in the sector have been reflected through the recruitment to programmes and impacted on the sustainability of programmes. That said, we do continue to see new programmes coming forward.

Programmes are showing resilience and working in creative ways to address how they ensure they are fit for purpose in preparing students for their roles in a range of multi-disciplinary, non traditional environments whilst retaining the value of youth work as a distinct professional approach.

The reduced insight into destinations is a concern, especially given the categories have been amended to capture information more clearly. There is a real need to understand the current numbers of youth workers and where they are working as knowledge of this for the profession is weak. Being able to understand the employment landscape and the roles will assist not only in the work of ETS and consideration of qualification pathways and curriculum but also support a wider national need to argue for support for the profession that is at significant risk.

This report is now many years in to a pattern of change within programmes – lower recruitment, younger entrants, less mature entry, a deepening divide in gender with very low male representation choosing to join the profession and a challenging landscape to try and secure placements and employment to support robust professional formation. The impact on the profession of these factors needs further analysis that goes beyond the scope of annual monitoring.

As always the ETS committee has a critical role to play in promoting and improving understanding around the importance and value of the professional level youth work qualification and the pathways into youth work practice as employment and placements continue to expand in non-traditional youth work environments.

Given the range of challenges to the profession of youth work and the role of youth support workers more generally, ETS may wish to consider writing a **Workforce Strategy for England**; a process that will facilitate focused discussion on the key challenges and the steps that need to be taken to secure the role of youth work into the future. As we see awareness re-emerging about the need to support young people and the role of youth work within this, there is growing concern that the sector is declining in number both through reduced graduates and through the loss of professionals who have disappeared from view since austerity cuts impacted dramatically on their employment.

The writing of a strategy would enable ETS and NYA to position what is required in terms of research, review and development. Through making a robust case funding can be sought to support this much needed work. This would in turn enable further partnership work with stakeholders and create a vision and objectives for ETS and others to focus work toward achieving.