

NYA Youth Work Qualifation Framework

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Pathways to Practice

Feedback from the field of Youth Work:

- Youth work workforce is under pressure
- Burnout, recruitment challenges, and high turnover
- Many staff unqualified or unable to access training
- Fragmented pathways and inconsistent standards
- But also: strong practice, committed people, and real momentum for change

Youth Strategy

'People who Care'

- Calls for a **coherent training pathway**
- Emphasises **skilled, supported, qualified youth workers**
- Highlights need for **standardised qualifications**
- Frames youth work as a **professional, valued workforce**
- **NYA framework responds directly to this.**

Today's Workshop

Part 1: What's happening now?

- Workforce levels
- Current qualifications
- Gaps, strengths, barriers

Part 2: Introducing the draft **6-level qualification framework**

- Mapping the new levels to real workforce experience
- Identifying barriers to training and progression
- Co-designing what London needs next

The Vision

A youth work workforce where:

- Everyone working with young people has a clear qualification pathway
- Training is accessible, relevant, and valued
- Youth work is a viable, respected career
- Organisations can recruit, retain, and grow talent
- Young people benefit from a confident, skilled workforce

L1

L2

L3

L4

L5

L6

Reflective Practice

Social Justice
(Entry level)

▶ **Social Justice**
(Professional youth worker)

Evaluation and Impact
(Entry level)

▶ **Evaluation and Impact**
(Professional youth worker)

Leadership and Management
(Entry level)

▶ **Leadership and Management**
(Professional youth worker)

Relational Practice
(Entry level)

▶ **Relational Practice**
(Professional youth worker)

Developing Youth Work Practice
(Entry level)

▶ **Developing Youth Work Practice**
(Professional youth worker)

Professional Responsibility
(Entry level)

▶ **Professional Responsibility**
(Professional youth worker)

Continuous Professional Development, Specialist Training

Level 1 (Award)

Level 1: Introduction to Youth Work

- Entry point, no experience required
- Knowledge-based, safe practice, youth work values
- Ideal for volunteers, young people, new staff
- A stepping stone into Level 2

Level 2 (Cert)

Level 2

- Contributes to delivery with support
- Builds rapport, follows procedures
- Intermediate skills and safe practice
- Common entry point for part-time staff and volunteers

Level 3 (Diploma)

Level 3:

- Basic knowledge of youthwork theory, processes and policies which support good youthwork
- Deliver youth work sessions competently
- Manage routine situations
- Where relevant, supporting others

Level 4 (HNC, HTQ, Cert HE)

Level 4:

- Professional competence grounded in applied practice,
- Capable of interpreting and evaluation a range of information/data to make informed decisions.
- Integrating theory with practice and demonstrating professional responsibility.

Level 5 (HND, HTQ, Dip HE)

Level 5:

- Youth work expertise, with a focus on leadership and working with complexity
- Critical understanding of youth work principles and practices
- Able to apply concepts and principles from aligned professions
- Can exercise judgement and autonomy
- Leading, managing and supervising/mentoring where appropriate

Level 6 – Fully Qualified BA Hons

.Level 6

- A critical understanding of youth work values, ethics, across diverse settings.
- Critically evaluate, lead, and shape youth work practice, influencing policy, quality, and organisational direction.
- Integration of theory and practice from youth work and aligned disciplines
- Ability to lead on evaluation and impact
- Lead, supervise/mentor, and develop youth workers and youth work teams,

Small Groups

- 1. Where does your current workforce sit within this framework?**
- 2. What development needs are emerging at each level?**
- 3. What training, partnerships, or resources could support development?**

Reflections...

THORN



challenge

ROSE



success

BUD



opportunity