

Project 2025

Strategic Themes

A FOCUS FOR ASSOCIATION ACTIVITY



The Professional Association of Lecturers
in Youth and Community Work

The Directors Statement on Strategic Direction
UPDATED: 26TH JUNE 2020

About the Association:

The Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work (PALYCW), referred to in this document as the Association, is a member organisation that represents the interests of academics, educators and researchers in the field of youth and community work. The Association supports and represents in excess of 250 educators at over 50 institutions and agencies in the UK and overseas. We seek to promote, and advocate for, an informed understanding of youth and community work in the UK by connecting our membership through conferences, events and member-led interest groups.

The Association has its roots in the emergence of youth and community work as a distinct profession across the four nations of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We used to be known as TAG, the 'Training Agencies Group' that contributed to the development of many youth and community work education programmes in the UK dating back to the 1970's. The Training Agencies Group itself was formally superseded by the Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work in 2010 and recognition of 'TAG' is retained in the legal title of the Association and is often used interchangeably by members in referring to the Association.

The Association plays a particular role in supporting the teaching of professionally qualifying awards in youth and community work, however, we welcome interest in the Association from academics, educators and researchers working in the field of youth and community work across the UK. Our membership reflects the diversity of people engaged in the disciplines of youth work and community development.

Constitution and Objects:

The Association is owned by its members and managed through the election and appointment of Trustees (also referred to as Directors). At any one time there will be a minimum of three Directors (and an agreed policy of sustaining six Directors) of which one-third must stand down or be re-elected at the annual general meeting. The Directors of the Association hold the responsibility for ensuring the Association strives to achieve its charitable objects and is managed within charitable company law.

The Association is constituted as a Charitable Company, in compliance with the Charities Act 1993 and Companies Act 2006. The Association is a registered charity no. 1164809 and a registered company limited by guarantee, company number 7233585.

The Memorandum and Articles of the Association state that our Objects are:

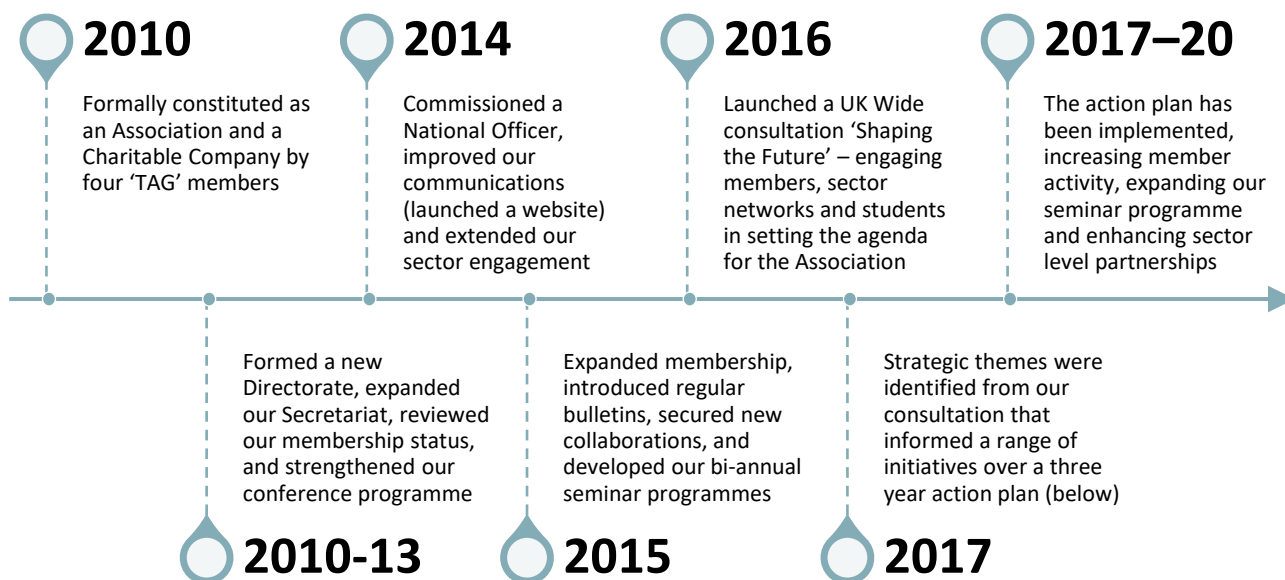
To promote research, education and training in youth and community work in higher education for the public benefit to:

1. Draw on and extend current thinking and practice in relation to the development of knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities, and personal values and commitment in youth and community work to
2. Improve the quality of professional youth and community work education and training to
3. Support the development of youth workers to enable them to provide quality youth and community work to young people and communities to
4. Facilitate and support the education, development and flourishing of young people and communities in the area of benefit.

A current profile of our Directors and Officers is maintained at: <http://www.tagpalycw.org/leadershipteam>

The journey so far:

The past decade has seen a steady growth of Association activity, growing our membership, enhancing our communication and extending the activities that have informed our contribution to the sector.



What has got us here:

In 2017 we identified four strategic themes for Association activity over a three-year period. These were informed by our 'Shaping the Future' day conferences in Spring 2016. These themes were captured as:

1. Enhancing professional Identity

Within this theme the Association has collaborated with sector colleagues to renew validation processes for professional courses, ensuring they are sustainable and fit for purpose in a contemporary context. These were relaunched in 2019 and implemented in a new round of validation activities in 2019-2020.

2. Strengthening shared integrity

Within this theme the Association has worked with sector bodies to ensure a clear articulation of youth and community work practice is informed by shared principles, values, and ethics. We have supported sector agencies in strengthening the profile of their work and developed a new statement on Association ethics.

3. Recognising innovation in emergent and established practice

Within this theme the Association has supported local Association member institutions to partner with us and local youth and community work agencies to explore issues in a series of 'Policy and Practice Seminars'. Over 700 participants engaged in knowledge exchange seminars across nine regional venues in 2018.

4. Extending our impact, influence and interconnections

Within this theme the Association has engaged widely through hosting conferences, forging new partnerships, and contributing to the growing awareness of the distinctive contribution of youth and community work within contemporary society. We have expanded our national conference presence, contributions to consultations, international profile and policy influence – exemplified by presenting to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs in July 2018 with our contributions highlighted in the final report published in 2019.

Collectively, these actions were intended to enrich the profession in sustaining practice through a period of change and to build an informed basis for asserting the value of youth and community work within the academy and wider society.

Project 2025: A renewed strategic focus for the Association

The Association Directors, in consultation with the wider membership, have explored how we build on the achievements of the past decade with a view to embedding our identity as a distinct community of practice within the Higher Education sector. Our ambition is to cement the characteristics of association within our field of practice over the next five years so that the value of youth and community work practice is sustained for a further generation. To achieve this, we recognise the need to resource and facilitate our members in the pursuit of collective impact as a community of practice. We recognise that this requires a conscious effort to frame our activity within the principles of what we have defined as distributed agency:

Distributed agency is a concept when put to work can be used to help navigate organisational and social change processes. **The focus shifts from what *individuals* do to what *'we'* can do when brought into relation with each other over space and time.** The concept of distributed agency will enable us to orientate our discursive practices in ways that acknowledge we are a diverse group of people who commit to being in association with each other; and that we are situated in different contexts and have different desires, motivations and interests. Distributed agency is when we purposefully combine these discursive differences and practices with conscious intent to create outcomes that we collectively ascribe to or want. The concept of distributed agency has the capacity to create conditions that advance social change processes by bringing us into relation with each other through social media, the research that we produce, the students that we teach, the knowledge that we make and the networks we engage within. Our ability to act is enhanced when we work co-operatively and collaboratively, when we engage in relationships based on reciprocity, mutuality, and recognition.

Distributed agency, for the Association, has three distinguishing features:

- Conscious and purposeful intent, characterised by openness and transparency
- Flexibility and responsiveness to learn, adapt and change
- Ethical and accountable relationships

These distinguishing features act as criteria for participation and engagement in our activities, relationships, and partnerships. They provide a foundation for making judgements about the value, quality, and 'success' of the Association as an assemblage of professional educators, researchers and academics that share a vision for human flourishing.

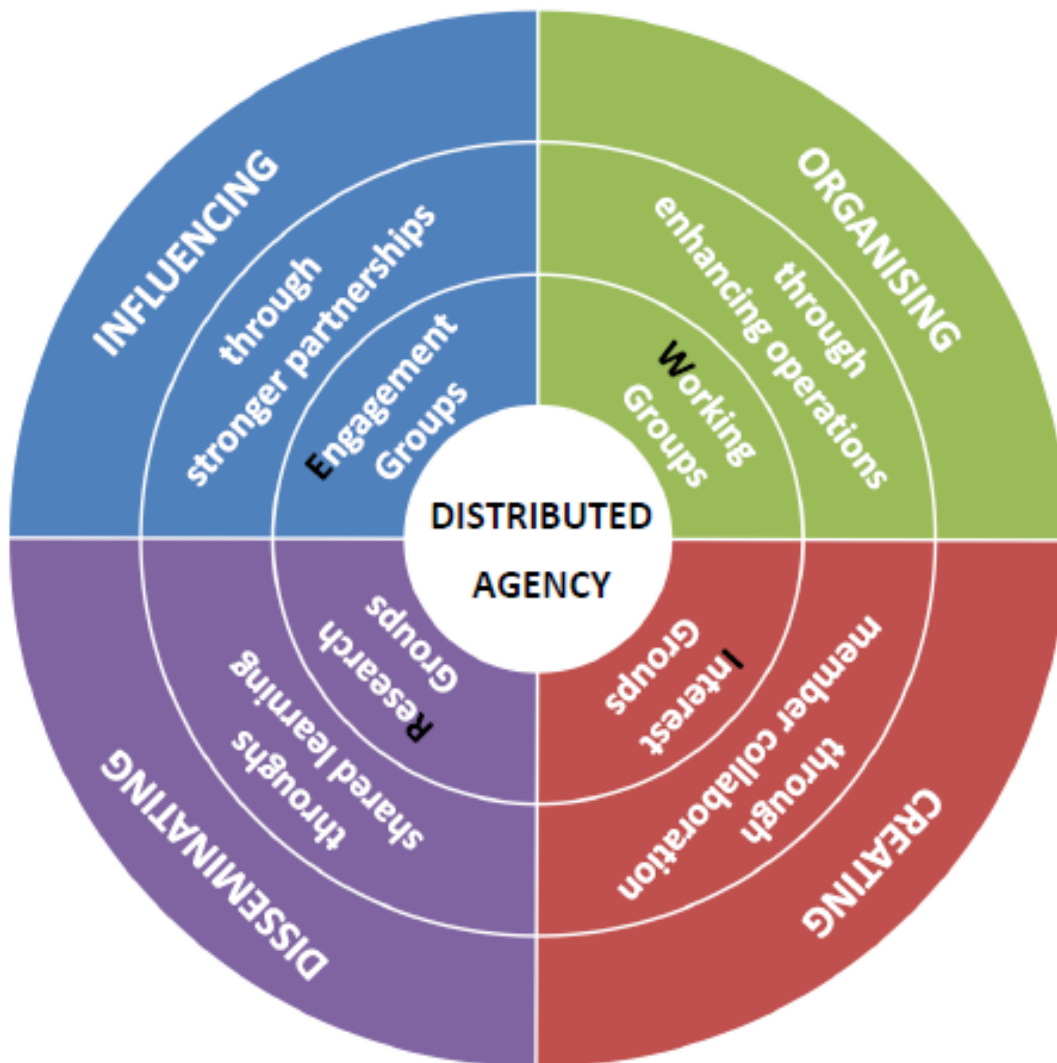
From this foundation, we have constructed four interrelated strategic themes that will provide a structure for articulating our activity, shaping our ways of working and enabling us to evaluate our impact as an Association in a meaningful pursuit of our mission and goals.

These themes are illustrated in a thematic model (on page 4) and have been captured in four words:

1. **Organising:** through enhancing operational practices
2. **Creating:** through enabling member collaborations
3. **Disseminating:** through facilitating shared learning
4. **Influencing:** through strengthening partnerships

The themes have been generated from activities that have strengthened the Association throughout the last decade. They will build on the foundation of core Association activities (such as our Annual Conference) and develop areas of innovation (such as our regional seminar programme) and foster new ways of working that celebrate the diversity and richness of our community of practice. They translate into concrete actions that will be reviewed regularly and are presented as action plans on pages 5-8.

Strategic Model: Distributing Agency through Four Strategic Themes



Distributing Agency: A 'WIRE' Group Approach

Core to the principle of distributed agency is enabling more members to contribute, co-operate and collaborate through member-led activities. A method we have devised to promote member-led activity is a framework for 'WIRE' groups (or networks) related to each of our strategic themes:

- **Working groups**, focussed on task and finish activities, within the theme of **Organising**
- **Interest groups**, convening around members special interests, within the theme of **Creating**
- **Research groups**, nurturing research and knowledge exchange, within the theme of **Disseminating**
- **Engagement groups**, expanding partnership opportunities, within the theme of **Influencing**.

It is our ambition to work collaboratively to craft different spaces and ways of organising that enable more members to meaningfully find ways of accessing and creating collective ways of working that embody the principle of distributed agency. Adopting a distributed agency approach, will ensure that 'WIRE' groups can operate in an environment where, "*flexibility and accountability [are] divided and shared out among multiple individuals while still being anchored in a single ... course of action*" (Enfield and Kockelman 2017).

We imagine this process to be fluid and reviewed regularly as part of the 'Project 2025' action plan. As the action plan is implemented, we anticipate developing our shared understanding of what this looks like, providing opportunities of organising based on the principles of distributed agency and collective impact.

Theme 1 - Organising: through enhancing operational practices

This theme addresses the core role of the Association as a catalyst for membership activity and wider distributed agency. We recognise the effectiveness of 'Project 2025' will be founded on the Associations capacity to facilitate, connect and resource membership activity. This requires reliable, accessible and sustainable operational practices. We have identified the need to create more automated digital tools that will assist in administering the Association, breaking down geographical divides and time barriers by creating increased connectivity between members. This theme will require us to address our patterns, means and methods of meeting together; the tools we use to communicate, share information and store data; and the policies we apply to managing our resources and legal obligations.

The Association has secured additional financial resources (through grant funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation) to assist in strengthening these core functions between 2020-2022 and it is our goal to have new systems and processes fully embedded by August 2022. It is also our ambition to secure ongoing financial resources to sustain the services we provide to members and, by 2023, to be self-sufficient in financing our core operations through a sustainable membership model.

Key Actions:

Actions: Progressed through Working Groups	Timescale	Outcome
<p>1. Enhance access to membership and member activity Develop frameworks for expansion of member engagement; explore funding streams that support member activity; and review membership subscriptions to sustain operational costs Reference point: Membership policy; and Funding Bids</p>	<p>Begin: July 2020 Next Review: May 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025 Indicator: Membership no's and sustainability</p>
<p>2. Automate administrative tools and resources Review and revise administrative processes for ease of access, use and portability (email, office, web and finance processes); including remote membership renewal and management. Reference point: Administration Handbook and Guides</p>	<p>Begin: Jan 2020 Next Review: Sept 2020</p>	<p>End: Jan 2021 Indicator: Systems established</p>
<p>3. Enhance use of Digital Communication Continue to produce regular monthly ebulletins (refreshing circulation format) and grow the use of digital media (website, social media, and online conferencing) for communications within and outside of Association Membership. Reference point: Communications Policy and Action Plan</p>	<p>Begin: Jan 2020 Next Review: July 2020</p>	<p>End: July 2025 Indicator: Levels of reported engagement</p>
<p>4. Reform, test and evaluate new meeting structures Trial a new pattern for core Association activities, utilising digital tools for online meetings and prioritising essential in person gatherings in dialogue with members. Reference point: Annual cycle of governance and engagement</p>	<p>Begin: July 2020 Next Review: Jan 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025 Indicator: Patterns of engagement</p>
<p>5. Establish a statement of Values and Ethics Establish a statement of values and ethics that act as a framework for educators in the practice of teaching youth and community work. Reference point: Values and Ethics Statement</p>	<p>Begin: Jan 2020 Next Review: July 2020</p>	<p>End: September 2020 Indicator: Published policy</p>
<p>6. Review Governance and Risk Procedures Review the current governance document for currency (including branding and messaging); governance structure; accountability and longer-term financial sustainability. Reference point: Association Rule Book and Procedures</p>	<p>Begin: Jan 2020 Next Review: Sept 2020</p>	<p>End: Nov 2021 Indicator: Systems reviewed</p>

Theme 2 - Creating: through enabling member collaborations

Theme one strengthens our organisational capacity, acting as a catalyst that will enable dynamic, collaborative intra-actions across the membership and harness new and different ways of organising to make a difference. This theme builds on ‘commonalities of difference’ across our national, regional and local contexts that celebrate our shared histories as a foundation from which to unfold new expressions and formations of youth and community work teaching practices.

We will facilitate members collective action by working alongside them to initiate and develop regional and specific issue interest groups. We will reinvigorate our youth and community education teaching practices through a seminar series organised and curated in national, regional and local spaces. To do this, we will support subscribing institutions to partner with us, local, national and International youth and community work agencies to explore issues in a series of ‘Learning and Teaching Seminars’. This will contribute to the ambition described in ‘Theme 3’ to disseminate knowledge about higher education learning and teaching practices in youth and community education through publications. We will also extend our International networks, identifying areas of common interest and developing wider communities of practice.

Key Actions:

Action: Progressed through Interest Groups	Timescale	Outcome
<p>1. Facilitate Regional Groups Launch a call for regional groups and identify convenors. Make available a small fund to support regional activity Evaluate activity and renewal plan (where appropriate). Reference point: Annual Review of Regional Groups</p>	<p>Begin: July 2020 Next Review: January 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025 Indicator: Full UK coverage for member activity</p>
<p>2. Regional Seminar programme Launch a call for expressions of interest in a ‘Learning and Teaching Seminar’ programme. Fund subscribing HEI members as convenors to deliver regional seminars across the UK. Curate and report outcomes. Support publications.</p>	<p>Begin: July 2020 Next Review: Nov 2020</p>	<p>End: July 2022 Indicator: Seminars delivered and summary report to funder</p>
<p>3. Facilitate Interest / Thematic Groups Identify convenors and work with them to agree an engagement plan and schedule of activities. Make funds available to facilitate scheduled activities. Work with convenors to evaluate group activity and outcomes. Reference point: Annual Interest Group Review</p>	<p>Begin: July 2020 Next Review: January 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025 Indicator: Increase in member collaboration</p>
<p>4. Annual UK Wide Conference Organise and deliver an annual members conference rotating around the four UK nations. Evaluate and curate resources from conference for online publication. Reference point: Annual publication of conference resources</p>	<p>Begin: Sept 2020 Next Review: Sept 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025 Indicator: Conferences and publications</p>
<p>5. Widen access to international collaborations Engage in the identification, development and contribution to international partnerships across networks that advance research and teaching collaborations in youth and community education. Reference point: Annual international engagement report</p>	<p>Begin: July 2020 Next Review: Jan 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025 Indicator: Increase in member links to international work</p>
<p>6. Explore Erasmus+ Project Opportunities We will establish a working group to explore and develop an Erasmus plus bid that facilitates collaboration.</p>	<p>Begin: July 2020 Next Review: Sept 2020</p>	<p>End: Jan 2022 Indicator: Fund success</p>

Theme 3 - Disseminating: through facilitating shared learning

This theme addresses the interest in developing shared spaces in which to nurture and develop knowledge exchange and innovative research opportunities. The theme builds on the previous three-year strategic aim, where we created “spaces to foster collaboration through dialogue, storytelling and recording our different practices”. This aim is now firmly embedded in the Associations principles and practice. To develop this thinking further and achieve the next five-year strategic aim of facilitating shared learning, we will develop appropriate conventions and approaches to nurture an environment in which collaborative writing, research, teaching scholarship, knowledge exchange and publications can flourish.

We will continue the work of supporting new lecturers and colleagues to develop their teaching practices, writing confidence with the provision of writing workshops and retreats, drawing upon digital spaces to help facilitate these and widen further the access to shared learning hubs. We will also expand the participation of members in knowledge exchange activities that inform, advocate and influence policy and practice.

Key Actions:

Action: Progressed through Research Groups	Timescale	Outcome
1. Writing Support Facilitate the creation of ‘writing spaces’ in which members can work either collaboratively or independently on developing their writing for publication and/or self-development. Reference point: List of member publications on our website	Begin: Sept 2020 Next Review: Jan 2021	End: July 2025 Indicator: Two ‘events’ to be held annually
2. Research Projects and Groups Support the exploration of research projects and research groups through the use of the Association website to promote and attract members to work collaboratively on areas of interest.	Begin: Sept 2020 Next Review: July 2021	End: July 2025 Indicator: Increased collaborations
3. Sharing Teaching and Learning Practices Curate and make available resources, texts and online publications from shared activity and knowledge exchange in the practice of teaching and learning for youth and community work (including outcomes from Theme 2.2, our Teaching and Learning Seminar programme). Reference point: List of resources available on our website	Begin: Sept 2020 Next Review: May 2021	End: July 2022 Indicator: Publication of seminar materials
4. Engaging in Consultations Convene response groups to the call for consultations that enable the voice of our members, partners and stakeholders to influence policy and practice within the field of youth and community work.	Begin: Sept 2020 Next Review: Jan 2021	End: July 2025 Indicator: No. of consultation response papers
5. Publications Work towards the provision of a library of publications on the Association website, including the creation of a Conference Digest: a collection of publications presented at the Annual Association Conference. Reference point: List of member publications on our website	Begin: July 2020 Next Review: Sept 2021	End: July 2025 Indicator: Currency of web publications list
6. Support for New Lecturers Develop a programme of support and knowledge sharing for new lecturers, enabling the development of teaching skills, sector knowledge and research practices. Reference point: Use of online convening activities	Begin: Sept 2020 Next Review: Jan 2021	End: July 2025 Indicator: Level of engagement

Theme 4 - Influencing: through strengthening partnerships

This theme will address the partnership and representative opportunities for Association members. We will continue to build and develop partnerships and representative activities in fields related to youth and community work. This requires a regular review of strategic relationships and engagement opportunities. We will enhance and maintain our Strategic Relationships Register and create more engagement opportunities across the membership. This will involve a sharing of responsibilities for representative activities when attending conferences, consultations and validation panels. Appropriate guidance for representative contributions and mechanisms for reporting and/or evaluation will need to be developed.

The Association has secured a respected place in the sector and has been contributing regularly to strategic activities. It is our goal that members are supported in taking action and feel empowered to speak on behalf of the Association when engaged in sector activities by 2025.

Key Actions:

Action: Progressed through Engagement Groups	Timescale	Outcome
<p>1. Engaging with Academic and Training Agencies Review our current priorities and relationships, identifying activities that will advance opportunities for learning and qualifications in youth and community work across the four nations of the UK. Reference point: Strategic Relationships Register</p>	<p>Begin: Sept 2020 Next Review: July 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025</p>
<p>2. Engaging with Sector Bodies and Organisations Work closely with leading sector bodies to advance the profile and role of youth and community work, with a particular focus on the emerging workforce (student body) and workforce development (CPD). Reference point: Strategic Relationships Register</p>	<p>Begin: July 2020 Next Review: July 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025</p>
<p>3. Engaging with Campaigns, Groups and Unions. Review our current priorities and relationships, identifying activities that will advance opportunities for raising the profile and status of youth and community work. Reference point: Strategic Relationships Register</p>	<p>Begin: Sept 2020 Next Review: July 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025</p>
<p>4. Policy Engagement Identify current policy initiatives and government departments where expertise and engagements from the Association would inform national policy developments Reference point: Strategic Relationships Register</p>	<p>Begin: July 2020 Next Review: July 2021</p>	<p>End: July 2025</p>
<p>5. Strategic initiatives We will work with sector partners to develop areas of strategic interest that are shared across the membership. Two partnerships we will initially prioritise are: 1. Opportunities with the Co-op College / University 2. Opportunities with Commonwealth Partners</p>	<p>Begin: Sept 2019 Next Review: Sept 2020</p>	<p>End: July 2025</p>

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION:

Association Membership

England: 203

Wales: 27

Scotland: 10

Northern Ireland: 9

Rest of the world: 3

Full Members: 216

Affiliates: 29

Associates: 7

Institutions

England:

Birmingham University College
Bishop Grosseteste University
University of Bolton
Bradford College
University of Brighton
University of Central Lancashire
Coventry University
University of Cumbria
Institute for Children, Youth and Mission
De Montfort University
University of Derby
University of East London
University of Gloucestershire
Goldsmiths College, University of London
University of Huddersfield
University of Hull
Leeds Beckett University
Liverpool Hope University
University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth
Moorlands College
Nazarene Theological College
Newman University
University of Northampton
Nottingham Trent University
Open University
Ruskin College, Oxford
University of Sunderland
University of Worcester
YMCA George Williams College

Wales:

Cardiff Metropolitan University
Glyndwr University Wrexham
University of South Wales
University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Scotland:

Dundee University
University of Glasgow
University of West of Scotland

Northern Ireland:

University of Ulster
Moorlands College @Youth Link NI



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