

# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Brownlow Resource Centre,  
Craigavon

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2011

# CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. CONTEXT	1
2. FOCUS	2
3. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	2
4. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	3
5. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	4
6. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS	5
7. CONCLUSION	5
APPENDIX	

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## 1. CONTEXT

1.1 Brownlow Resource Centre (the centre) is a purpose-built young adult provision situated in Craigavon, adjacent to Craigavon Leisure Centre, between two non-selective schools, Brownlow Integrated College and Lismore Comprehensive. The centre specialises in the delivery of developmental work with young people aged 14-25 managed by the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB).

1.2 The centre is one of three main youth facilities managed by a team leader under the Brownlow Area Youth Project (BAYP) that was created in 2001 to include Drumgor and Tullygally youth centres. The centre provides an administrative hub and base for all of the staff involved in the three youth centres. A full-time senior clerical officer is responsible for the overall administration of the area project. (Appendix)

1.3 The catchment area includes the three electoral wards of Drumgor, Drumgask and Taghnevan. According to the information supplied by the centre, the electoral areas are considered to be in the top 10% of the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland (NI), with over one-third of the population currently unemployed.

1.4 The figures provided by the SELB indicate that in the catchment area served by the centre, over 8% of pupils last year left school without any General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) qualifications, the NI average is 2.1%; the numbers of pupils leaving with the minimum standard of five GCSEs is just below the NI average.

1.5 The centre does not have a systematic record or detailed analysis of the profile of attendance of members. The membership information indicates an overall membership in 2010 of 129, of whom almost one-quarter have a recognised disability or additional learning need. During the inspection the average evening attendance was between 35-40 young adults. Membership is restricted to young adults in the 14-25 age range; two other centres are within close proximity and cater for a younger age range, mostly below 14 years of age. Membership trends indicate that a core group of approximately 30 young people have attended the centre for at least three years.

**Table 1: Total membership**

Age group	4 - 9		14-15		16 - 18		19 +		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2007/08			23	18	31	35	11	12	130
2008/09			16	22	46	45	9	7	145
2009/10			12	18	32	41	9	11	123
2010/11			24	16	32	35	11	11	129

1.6 The team leader spends approximately one-third of her time managing the centre and is supported by eight part-time youth workers, three volunteers and several members of the youth forum who take an active leadership and management role. Three of the part-time staff have completed a certificate in community youth work at University of Ulster Jordanstown (UUJ). Two other part-time youth workers will commence the youth work degree course at UUJ in September 2011. All of the staff, including the volunteers, use their training effectively in their youth work delivery. Almost all of the staff work across the three youth centres when required.

1.7 The centre opens four evenings a week and most of the members attend a range of age-appropriate programmes; a minority attend the drop-in facility two evenings a week. There is flexible morning, afternoon and weekend provision in response to identified needs. A comprehensive summer programme takes place each July for three weeks.

## **2. FOCUS**

2.1 The inspection focused on: the efficacy of leadership and management of the centre; the quality of provision; and the achievements and standards of the young people.

2.2 The inspection team observed nine youth work sessions, including the work of the team leader and the centre staff; meetings took place with the Area Youth Officer (AYO), the team leader, three parents and almost all of the staff team. The inspection team examined a range of documentation provided by the organisation, including the unit development plan, monthly report forms, staff evidence files and records of monitoring visits.

2.3 Discussions took place with ten young people in relation to their health and well-being, the arrangements for safeguarding, and the quality of youth provision.

## **3. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

3.1 At a strategic level, over the past ten years, the SELB management has reorganised effectively the staff team in the area to provide a youth service that caters well for the young adults in the Brownlow Resource Centre, as well as retaining appropriate provision for the younger age group in the area. The SELB has appropriately developed outreach and rural-based youth work through the successful application for additional external funding to employ a full-time youth worker. The centre also provides office accommodation to a Prince's Trust worker who impacts positively on the life and work of the centre by offering relevant and complementary services.

3.2 The team leader provides very good leadership; she inspires confidence and respect among the staff and the young people and generates a strong team spirit. She has been in post for over seven years and is dedicated to supporting the young people well through the work of the centre and the promotion of high standards.

3.3 The SELB has a strong commitment to quality improvement. The annual targets for the centre are included in a BAYP three-year development plan that is in its final year and reflects well the SELB strategic plan. There are seven well-planned priority areas: Participation; Inclusion; Gender Work; Health Promotion; Community Relations; Global Citizenship; and Staff Development. They have been developed from good formal and non-formal consultation processes with young people, parents and other youth providers in the community.

3.4 The AYO makes effective use of the good monitoring systems in place to assess the agreed targets. The AYO's regular monitoring visits and the six-weekly formal supervision meetings provide the team leader with useful evaluative feedback to support future planning. The support and supervision sessions by the AYO also provide good levels of challenge and draw on the expertise of the team leader.

3.5 The team leader supports and manages the part-time staff and volunteers well through effective informal support and ongoing and regular individual feedback for all members of staff. All of the staff including the volunteers have successfully completed relevant youth work training that they use effectively in their face-to-face youth work. In a minority of the evidence files examined, the recordings of youth work practice and evaluations are good. In the best practice there is good use of written evaluative recordings

to assess learning. The team leader and the staff acknowledge the need to review the purpose and role of the evidence files to ensure a more consistent approach. The staff in the centre need to demonstrate more clearly how the overall system of evaluation measures the learning outcomes for the young people and informs future planning.

3.6 The senior clerical officer provides efficient management of the financial and material resources and communicates effectively with all of the staff. The team leader, with the support of the senior clerical officer, is examining suitable systems to collate and analyse membership information and to record the young people's achievements.

#### **4 QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

4.1 The overall quality of the provision is very good. There are very good examples of detailed planning for specific projects, including the drugs and alcohol 'Attitude' programme and the Xtreme FM radio station project. These programmes reflect well the aims of the centre's action plan, particularly the priority area to increase the participation of young people in service design and delivery. The programmes retain the interests of the older age range and provide very good opportunities for their personal development and progression to leadership roles.

4.2 The quality of the youth work practice observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding with almost all of the sessions observed being good or better. In the best practice observed, the young people were involved in the planning and were clear about the learning intentions. The creative learning approaches were matched well to the young people's needs and abilities; and there was good involvement of the young people in the evaluation of the outcomes.

4.3 The 'Sights and Sounds' programme is aimed at young people with additional learning needs; the programme promotes inclusion and has increased significantly the participation of young people who have a range of abilities and interests. The young people involved in these projects reported an increase in their self-confidence and improved communication skills. During the inspection the participants of the 'Sights and Sounds' programme hosted a well-planned event to launch a Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) to highlight the positive outcomes of the programme. The event was well supported by parents, the local community and the relevant statutory agencies.

4.4 The 'Away from Violence' project, disability awareness programmes and the young men's work demonstrate that the part-time staff are using well the skills learnt during the youth work training programmes. Almost all of the staff know the purpose of youth work; understand the youth work curriculum; and reflect the core principles to meet effectively the needs of the young people.

4.5 Almost all of the projects observed provide opportunities for young people to meet with their peers in an age-appropriate environment and allow for the good development of organisational and planning skills through mature discussion, positive peer support, and the development of a range of technical skills such as broadcasting and DVD production skills. The recent introduction of the 'on-line' application for the Xtreme FM project has increased the range and number of applicants and demonstrates the good use of current technology. The staff have well-conceived plans to develop further the use of the Information Communication and Technology equipment in the centre.

4.6 The five representatives from the centre who are actively involved in the Craigavon Youth Council were able to articulate, to members of the inspection team, the learning from their involvement in the recently published research report, 'Bridging the Gap'. This research explored the types of activities and services for young people within the Craigavon

area and how young people view the adequacy and relevance of these services. The youth council members demonstrated clearly their ability to research and interpret information accurately; how to communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders; and how they have developed a good understanding of the impact of limited services on the wider community. As a result of the consultation process, the members of the BAYP are making proposals to the SELB to extend the opening times of the centre.

4.7 The team leader has established and maintains effective partnerships and external links with a range of relevant agencies and stakeholders. She plays a key role in the newly-formed Craigavon youth providers' forum and has developed appropriate links with the Prince's Trust, Opportunity Youth and, in particular, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. An example of the good networking and links includes the 16+ initiative, which is providing good support to young people who are coping with an independent living environment, in partnership with a social worker.

4.8 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is outstanding. The key features include the mutually respectful working relationships between the young people and the youth workers, and the effective support systems in place for those young people experiencing specific difficulties. The young people reported that they feel safe in the centre and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being. There is an agreed standard of behaviour and discipline which promotes respect and accepts differences.

4.9 The centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education but the following minor areas need to be addressed: the need to ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are made known directly to the parents at least every two years; and the need to update the current process for registration as detailed in the staff handbook.

## **5. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

5.1 The quality of the achievements and standards reached by the young people in the centre is very good. The young people respond enthusiastically to the educational and recreational opportunities provided and are fully involved, formally and informally, in the planning and delivery of programmes. Almost all of the young adults who are involved in a leadership role have successfully completed relevant training. Thirty-eight young people completed a trainee leader's programme and 36 were involved in members' training courses recognised by the SELB.

5.2 Since September 2010, over one-quarter of the membership has completed accredited Open College Network NI (OCNNI) courses, including Level 1 certificate in drugs and alcohol awareness and the Level 2 part-time certificate in youth work.

5.3 The young people develop good team-working skills through, for example, setting, sharing and reviewing targets. Over one-half of the members take up the many opportunities to assume a leadership role; they demonstrate very good levels of critical thinking and reflection by working effectively in the specific projects and teams.

5.4 The use of a well-developed peer educator programme allows for older members to work alongside their peers with additional learning needs in two highly stimulating projects, 'Sights and Sounds' and 'Attitude'. Observations of both programmes indicate that all of the young people benefit from their participation in these inclusive and stimulating projects which promote the core values of equity, diversity and interdependence.

5.5 The well-organised London exchange programme demonstrated clearly how a group of 14 members were able to explore and develop personal attitudes and values with young people from a diverse social and cultural background. The young people from both projects worked well together and, during the discussions held with members of the inspection team, stated that they had gained valuable independent living skills as a result of residing in the centre for 8 days. In one session observed, the good facilitation allowed for a mature and challenging debate between the young people about difference and cultural diversity.

5.6 The discussions held with parents, young people and external agencies confirmed that many of the young people, who are experiencing temporary or long-term emotional health and well-being issues, are acquiring a range of much-needed social and life skills through suitable support and advice from the youth work staff based in the centre.

5.7 The recently developed after-school revision class began as a direct result of requests from members who were feeling under pressure in preparing for the submission of school coursework. A small group of young people were observed working independently, and using the teamwork and peer support skills learned from other youth work programmes. The centre is discussing appropriately how this pilot can be supported further with more involvement from the local post-primary schools.

## **6. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

6.1 The main strengths of the provision include:

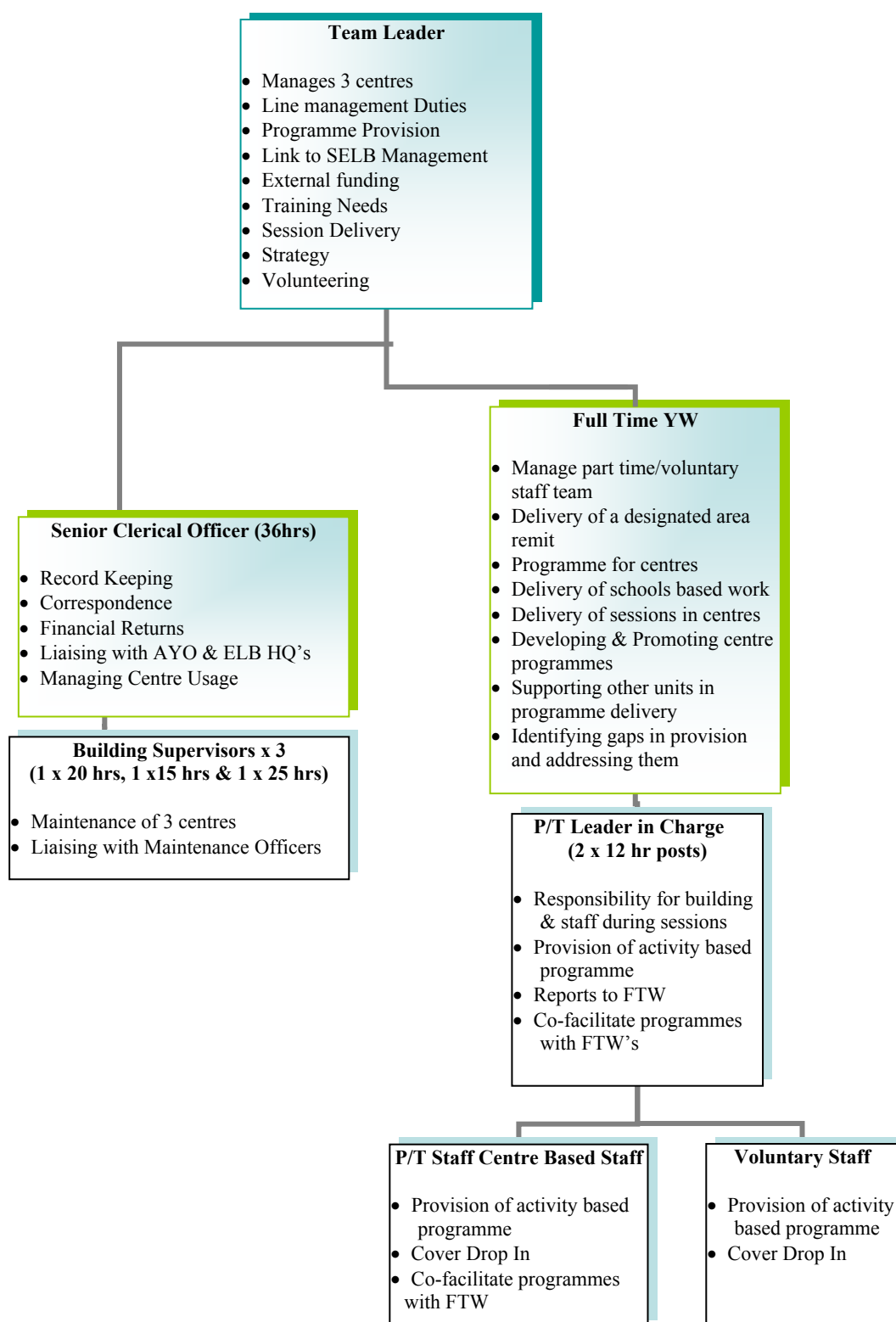
- the effective leadership of the team leader, who promotes positive working relationships among the staff and generates a strong team spirit;
- the very good opportunities taken by most of the staff team for continuous professional development that links well to improving the quality of provision;
- the good to outstanding quality of youth work in almost all of the sessions observed;
- the outstanding development of an inclusive culture which integrates young people well irrespective of their additional needs, diversity or background;
- the achievement of appropriate social and organisational skills by the young people, which increases their independence and helps them to plan, develop and manage their own lives more effectively; and
- the high levels of success achieved by most of the young adults who attend the accredited and non-accredited training programmes.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the quality of youth work provided by the organisation is very good. The organisation is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the young people and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.



# BROWNLOW AREA PROJECT (INCORPORATING BROWNLOW RESOURCE CENTRE) STRUCTURE



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