

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Centre Based Provision in the
Coleraine and Magherafelt Area

Report of an Inspection
in January 2013

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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 – meeting needs very effectively
Good – important strengths
Satisfactory – strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Inadequate – areas for improvement outweigh strengths
Unsatisfactory - areas for improvement significantly outweigh strengths

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Coleraine and Magherafelt are two district councils within the North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). The three full-time controlled youth centres situated within the area were the focus for the inspection with centres located in Magherafelt, Portrush and Sunlea in Coleraine. The centres are managed by a recently appointed team which includes an area youth officer supported by two senior youth workers (SYW). An additional cohort of youth workers supports the wider area-based programme. The youth programmes operate collectively over four evenings each week and are led by a youth support worker-in-charge (YSWIC.)

1.2 Figures supplied by the organisation demonstrate high numbers of registered members in each centre. The average nightly attendance during the inspection was 61; the YSWIC confirm that this figure is consistent and exceeds the expectations of the NEELB for similar centres (Appendix 1).

2. FOCUS

The area inspection focused on:

- the young people's achievements and standards;
- the quality of the provision; and
- the quality of the leadership and management, including the organisation's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

3. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected the quality of the centre-based provision is very good. The organisations are meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the young people; and have demonstrated their capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Overall performance level	Very Good
Contributory performance levels:	
Achievements and standards	Very Good
Provision for learning	Very Good
Leadership and management	Very Good

4. KEY FINDINGS

4.1 Achievements and standards

The quality of the young people's achievements and standards is very good.

4.1.1 The young people demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and commitment; and participate willingly in relevant activity and issue-based group work programmes. They value and recognise the significant progress in their personal and social skills, in particular, their increased self-confidence and ability to communicate effectively with peers and adults.

4.1.2 In the last three years 304 young people across the centres achieved appropriate accreditation in youth development, leadership skills, health and well-being, Child Exploitation Online Protection and the Millennium Volunteer awards; a further 58 completed relevant non-accredited courses. The young people value the benefits of these opportunities and programmes for their personal development and career pathways. A significant minority recognise well how the learning in the youth centre supports educational opportunities in other settings. It is important for the staff to continue to build on the links with formal education to help the young people overcome barriers to their learning.

4.1.3 The young people develop and maintain very good working relationships with each other and with the youth workers; they demonstrate resilience, and problem-solving skills, and work collaboratively with their peers and adults. They are well motivated and make a very valuable contribution to the youth provision and their community through the high number of young people involved in volunteering. In each centre there is very good evidence of the young people's awareness of community issues and how they are making a valuable contribution to improving the lives of others in their local area. In particular, the very good involvement of the youngest children in the well planned project in Sunlea youth centre, that provided relevant knowledge about the key projects and resources in their local community.

4.2 Quality of provision

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

4.2.1 The quality of the youth work sessions observed ranged from very good to good. The wide range of programmes on offer is matched well to the identified needs, abilities and ages of the young people.

4.2.2 The part-time staff compile evidence files of their work indicating appropriate and relevant preparation for each individual session. They are well motivated and committed to the role and purpose of youth work. In each centre the staff work collaboratively to improve the quality of the provision; and have established effective and respectful working relationships with the young people.

4.2.3 The YSWIC make good use of the centre management system (CMS) to analyse and collate data, including membership trends and attendance patterns, this in turn is used well to inform better programme planning. The CMS system is used effectively to record young people's achievements, however, further training and development is needed to maximise the potential of the system and to record concisely the young people's learning outcomes. Staff have also identified the need to be involved in consultations to improve the use of CMS and to disseminate further the very good examples of group work practice and programmes.

4.2.4 A very good range of opportunities is provided for the young people to express their views and to offer suggestions for future programmes. They are aware of the purpose and process of the programmes and opportunities and take collective responsibility for the outcomes. The wide range of participative structures allows for the young people's progression to leadership and representation on a number of relevant youth fora, including the centres' advisory committees.

4.2.5 An effective structure for progression is in operation that enables the young people to take responsibility matched to their stage of development. This is achieved successfully through the age appropriate programmes in the Junior, Intermediate and Senior sections. Each programme builds on the skills and knowledge previously learnt and offers new challenges and opportunities to engage the young people.

4.2.6 The range of appropriate youth work methodologies including group work, individual support, team building and residential experiences is used well to develop young people's understanding, skills and knowledge. In one example a group of young people gave a very good visual display and provided excellent explanation of their thoughts and learning from a visit to the concentration camps in Poland. Other examples include the enrichment programme in Sunlea, and the talent show in Magherafelt that was well-planned and led enthusiastically by the young people.

4.2.7 The centres make effective use of the experience and expertise of relevant partners and external organisations including local schools, community organisations and other statutory providers. The very good links with the Coleraine Borough council are providing suitable opportunities for young people to meet and work with groups and individuals from the local community on issues that impact on their lives.

4.2.8 The excellent caring ethos in the centres is evidenced through the mutual respect and the positive relationships among the young people, and between the young people and the staff. The youth workers know the young people and their families well and are aware of the learning needs and social and emotional issues that may have a negative impact on the young people achieving their full potential. The young people and their parents talked enthusiastically about the very good quality of pastoral support provided by the youth workers and the benefits for their families. In discussions with the inspection team, the young people reported that they feel safe in each of the centres and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

4.3 Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

4.3.1 The strategic leadership and management of the NEELB youth service is very good. The management at all levels is providing a clear direction to the youth work delivery and contributing positively to the overall achievements of the young people.

4.3.2 The new NEELB youth service's three year strategic plan takes good account of a comprehensive needs assessment process with stakeholders in the local areas. The YSWIC are currently in the process of establishing new Controlled Delivery Agreements with individual staff which will form the basis of an annual action planning process. A clear statement of expectations is to be included which will reflect appropriately youth service policy and take very good account of the needs of young people in local areas.

4.3.3 The youth provision across the centres is managed effectively by the recently established team of AYO and the two SYWs who work strategically and collegially with one another, and with members of the wider youth worker team, in the very best interests of the young people. The YSWIC provide very good leadership to their respective part-time staff teams. Collectively the whole team demonstrate a commitment to excellence and quality improvement at all levels. All of the youth workers are hard-working and have a comprehensive understanding of the local communities and the role they play in supporting young people.

4.3.4 On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the organisation has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

5. CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected the quality of the centre-based provision is very good. The organisations are meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the young people; and have demonstrated their capacity for sustained self-improvement.

APPENDIX 1

Total Membership (Portrush, Magherafelt, Sunlea)

Age group	4-9		10-15		16-18		19 +		Numbers involved in outreach/detached	TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2009/10	119	85	271	190	50	35	30	4		784
2010/11	144	109	307	223	66	50	36	6		951
2011/12	100	104	327	236	64	34	35	4		904
Current membership	117	79	297	212	61	26	36	5		833

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Magherafelt Youth Centre

The quality of the provision in this youth centre is very good.

The strengths include the:

- very good levels of participation and volunteering by older members to develop and maintain relevant and enjoyable programmes;
- young people's acquisition of appropriate skills and knowledge, to make informed choices about their lifestyle and to enhance their employability;
- very good programme planning, which provides opportunities for the young people to investigate a range of issues and builds on their interests;
- very good range of activities and programmes, which are well matched to the ages, needs and interests of the young people;
- very effective youth-support worker-in-charge, and his commitment to develop the provision in response to the accurate assessment of need within the area; and
- well-motivated staff team who have established mutually respectful working relationships with the young people and with each other.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Portrush Youth Centre

The quality of the provision in Portrush Youth Centre is very good.

The strengths include the:

- well-motivated and enthusiastic young people who spoke confidently about their achievements;
- the very good range of programmes and activities that develop well the young people's independence and increase their knowledge and understanding of important social and life skills;
- the very good example given to the younger members by the intermediate and senior members who take on leadership roles;
- very good management and leadership skills of the youth support worker-in-charge that inspires confidence and respect among the staff and the young people;
- the supportive part-time staff team who provide excellent pastoral care to the young people; and
- the effective links and partnerships including the very good parental involvement in the celebration of the young people's achievements.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Sunlea Youth Centre

The quality of the provision in Sunlea Youth Centre is outstanding.

The strengths include the:

- excellent range of skills, aptitudes and abilities developed by the young people, which benefits them and the community;
- the young people's very positive attitude and strong sense of ownership of the provision; and their ability to accept responsibility for making age-appropriate decisions about the design and content of their own programmes;
- consistently very high quality of the youth provision, which is matched well to the age, needs and interests of the young people;
- very well established culture and practice to assure the relevance and quality of the programmes, and the very good use of the centre management system to record the young people's progress;
- very good leadership of the youth support worker-in-charge and the enthusiastic and effective staff team; and
- excellent partnerships, with a wide network of organisations and individuals, which help to enrich and extend the young people's aspirations.

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