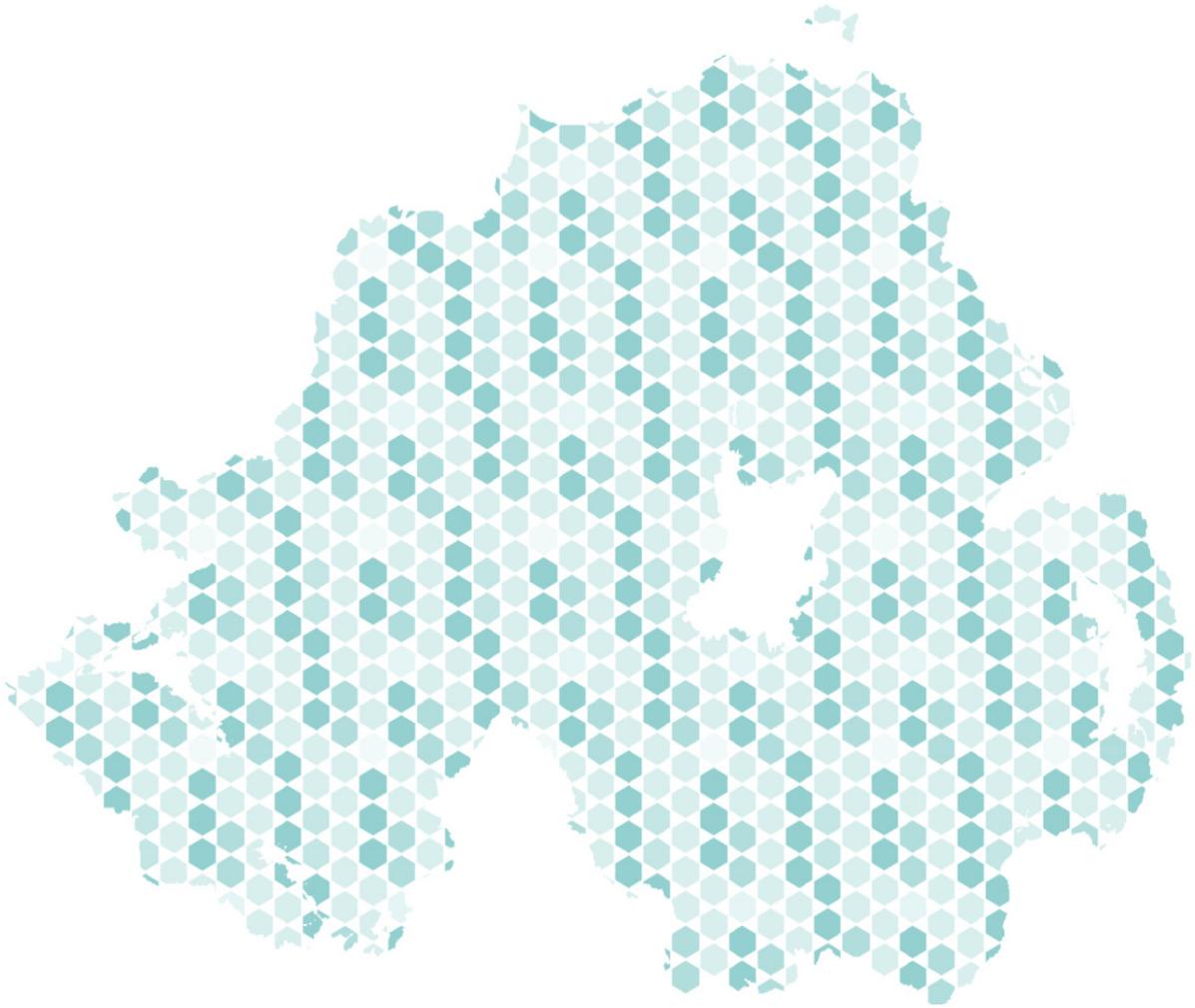


YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Long Tower Youth and
Community Centre,
Londonderry

Report of an Inspection
in March 2012



CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. CONTEXT	1
2. FOCUS	1
3. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION	1
4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION	2
5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	3
6. CONCLUSION	4
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

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

AYO	Area Youth Officer
DE	Department of Education
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FTW	Full-time Worker
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NI	Northern Ireland
WELB	Western Education and Library Board

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Long Tower Youth and Community centre (the centre) is a voluntary youth centre situated in the Brandywell area of Derry city since 1943. The centre was extensively refurbished to a high standard in 2001 through a variety of funding streams. The management committee employs a full-time youth worker, ten part-time paid staff and ten volunteers, and an administrator. The WELB provides ongoing financial and professional support that is monitored on an annual basis through an agreed service level agreement between the management committee and the area youth officer.

1.2 The centre is open 47 weeks of the year and provides structured youth work sessions on five evenings and three afternoons per week. The centre also hosts a variety of local youth and community organisations including: a pre-school group; an alternative education project; and local community groups. The centre provides age-specific activities and programmes for three distinct sections, Junior (aged 5-11), Intermediate (aged 11-14) and Senior (aged 14 plus).

1.3 According to the figures supplied by the centre, the membership at the time of the inspection was 786. Over one-half of the young people attend for specialist activity programmes including judo and dance; the majority of these young people do not usually attend other provision within the centre.

2. FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

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

The overall inspection process focused mainly on the youth work activities delivered by the youth work staff team. A significant minority of the sessions observed were facilitated by specialist instructors.

3. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of youth work provided in this centre is good.

The centre has important strengths in most of its education and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the centre's progress on the areas for improvement.

4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

The quality of achievements and standards is satisfactory

4.1.1 The young people display a sense of enjoyment and participate fully in the activities and programmes. They develop very good social skills through self-management and an awareness of communities beyond their own. In almost all of the sessions observed, the young people listened well to each other, engaged fully with the staff and took responsibility for their own learning when appropriate. In the discussion groups, the young people gained confidence and presented their points of view well through the good independent and collaborative working.

4.1.2 The large sports hall is used well for a range of programmes, including football, keep fit, fashion show, sports and dance. The afternoon activity sessions in the main hall provide a useful outlet for an energetic football activity that, although it has little structure, leaves the young people with a sense of enjoyment. The staff need to review the afternoon provision to develop more imaginative programmes that will continue with the enjoyment for the young people but build on their personal and social development.

4.1.3 Participation by young people is a key priority in the centre action plan. The staff talk regularly with the members informally and plan for activities and programmes which interest them. A members' committee has been re-constituted recently: it is beginning to represent the views of the membership, but it will be important that the young people understand clearly the rationale for, and the purpose of, the committee.

4.1.4 The centre celebrates the young people's achievements regularly through local press coverage and community events, including 'Long Tower's Got Talent' and variety shows. Parents support well the community events; last year the centre organised a successful concert which raised funds for a local charity working in Kenya.

4.1.5 Information provided by the centre indicates that approximately 100 young people in the past twelve months have achieved recognition and accreditation in a variety of relevant, issue-based programmes (Appendix 1). The full-time youth worker and staff have identified the need to encourage more young people in the sixteen-plus age group to avail of the accredited training opportunities for the purposes of increasing employability and to develop future leaders. A review of the programmes and activities on offer in the late evening drop-in session should be considered with the aim of attracting more senior members.

4.2 QUALITY OF PROVISION

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

4.2.1 The quality of the sessions observed in judo and dance ranged from very good to outstanding; they were facilitated to a very high standard, well-planned and structured to meet the needs of the differing ranges of ability. In judo, several members have reached recognised international standards and have represented their country in the Commonwealth games. The dancing section has competed successfully in competitions across Northern Ireland; over 350 dancers from across Ireland competed in the centre in November 2011.

4.2.2 The quality of the youth work sessions observed ranged from satisfactory to good. In the better practice, the workers plan well with clear outcomes which are understood by the young people, involve the young people in making decisions and use good group work skills to achieve the aim of the session. In most of the youth work sessions observed, the staff

need to plan for and to evaluate the progression in the young people's knowledge, understanding and skills in a more structured manner. The full-time youth worker has identified appropriately the need for more regular and structured supervision and the development of reflective practice for staff as a priority in the centre's action plan.

4.2.3 A minority of the recently introduced evidence files for part-time staff contain good information and some evaluation of individual programmes; the FTW is not providing enough formal support and supervision to ensure greater consistency across the staff team in compiling and making effective use of the evidence files.

4.2.4 The youth workers meet the young people's needs well through a wide range of activities, including summer residential experiences involving over 60 young people; a summer youth intervention programme that includes outdoor pursuits; and a group of young people who sang and performed in a variety concert. In discussions with the young people they stated that they enjoyed the residential experiences: for some they learnt to live away from home for the first time; others spoke of the good opportunities to make new friends and to try new activities.

4.2.5 The centre has developed appropriate links with a range of organisations that add value to the programme; the centre uses the expertise within the community appropriately to benefit the young people. Young people involved in the 'U Turn' group spoke confidently about what they had learnt about alcohol abuse and were able to discuss the consequences of anti-social behaviour and how they might plan for improvement.

4.2.6 There is an imbalance between the pastoral support and the development of the curricular provision; the building of the capacity of the staff by the FTW is essential in order to build on the work of the programmes by external agencies, including more issue-based programmes for the male members.

4.3 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the care, guidance and support of young people is very good.

The warm family ethos in the centre demonstrates the mutual respect and the positive relationships among the young people, and between the young people and the staff. The centre has many long-standing, family connections of which the staff and the management committee are proud and which they celebrate frequently.

4.4 SAFEGUARDING

The centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for the safeguarding of children and young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by DE, but the following areas need to be addressed: the centre needs to ensure that the designated youth worker and designated member of the management committee receive updated training; and, all parents need to be informed of the safeguarding policy and the complaints procedure.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

5.1 The well-informed management committee has a very good overview of the work of the centre. They are aware of the challenges of governance and are fully committed to improvement at all levels.

5.2 The full-time worker has been in the current post since 2000 and has had a long connection with the club for over 50 years. He is dedicated, hard-working and highly regarded in the community. His strong pastoral leadership provides outstanding support for the young people and for the staff who attend the centre.

5.3 The current centre action plan (September 2011-April 2012) is meeting the requirements under the WELB expectations of full-time centres, and includes four strategic themes of Support and Development, Inclusion, Participation and Health. The AYO has provided appropriate comments on making some of the targets more specific and quantifying some of the time-scales: the inspection findings would endorse the need for more focused targets.

5.4 The annual reports provide factual information on the wide range of activities and residential experiences that the members enjoyed in the previous 12 months. There is little evaluation of how the experiences are meeting the personal and social development of members and how the outcomes for the young people are measured.

5.5 The management committee has identified appropriately the need for more formal consultation with key staff, the young people and the community to develop a medium- to long-term strategic vision for the future of the centre.

6. **CONCLUSION**

6.1 In most of the areas inspected the quality of provision in this centre is good. The centre has important strengths in most of its education and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the centre's progress on the areas for improvement.

6.2 The areas for improvement are:

- The increased capacity of the staff to build upon the programmes facilitated by outside agencies, and to plan for and evaluate the progression of the development of young people's knowledge, understanding and skills; and
- The development of a medium- to long-term strategic vision for the curricular division of the centre through a more formal consultation by the management committee with key staff, the young people and the community.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Total Membership (Data supplied by the centre)

Age group	4-9		10-15		16-18		19+		Numbers involved in outreach/detached	TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2008/09	148	118	172	159	49	60	25	19		750
2009/10	125	110	180	186	44	50	25	18		738
2010/11	121	1360	188	200	46	51	20	18		774
2011/12	124	133	191	203	46	51	20	18		786

Table 2: Leadership training from September 2010

Title of course including accreditation details	Number of young people enrolled	Number of adults enrolled	Percentage successfully completing
OCN LEVEL 2-3		5	80%
ONE LIFE LIVE IT	18		60%
U-TURN GROUPS	36		100%
SEEDS YOUTH			
ALIVE	20		100%
MOOD MATTERS	14		75%
GOOD RELATIONS	11		100%

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