

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Matt Talbot Youth Centre,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in February 2012

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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
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

AYO	Area Youth Officer
BELB	Belfast Education and Library Board
FTYW	Full-time Youth Worker
NIOCN	Northern Ireland Open College Network

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Matt Talbot Youth Centre (the centre) is located in the Moyard area in the Upper Springfield electoral ward of west Belfast. The ward has multiple levels of social and economic disadvantage and is ranked in the top 10% of electoral wards suffering deprivation. The centre is managed by the BELB and is open five evenings, including a week-end session, and two afternoons each week.

1.2 The membership has declined significantly over the last three years. The staff report that the closure of the local primary school in June 2011 has had an adverse impact on the centre's programme and has also contributed to the decline in membership. The current membership of 131 represents less than one-fifth of the young people in the area. During the inspection there was an average attendance of 60 young people each evening.

1.3 The membership consists of two age groups: the 7-13 (junior) age group who attend the afternoon sessions and from 7-9pm each evening; and the 13 + (senior) age group who can attend any of the evening sessions. The junior section is dominated by males and there are very few members older than 16 years of age. Almost all of the young people in the senior section are volunteers and make a valuable contribution to the centre. (See Appendix 1)

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 the centre's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

3. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

The quality of provision in this centre is good. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address.

4. KEY FINDINGS

4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

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

4.1.1 The young people demonstrate high levels of commitment and enjoyment; they participate regularly in age-appropriate programmes and group work. They acquire relevant knowledge and skills to make informed choices about their lifestyles, develop self-confidence and achieve high standards in a range of good quality activities.

4.1.2 The after-school sessions evaluated during the inspection provided young people with good semi-structured creative arts and personal development programmes. The centre is establishing links with a local primary school and is reinforcing the young people's learning in school about the solar system and the position of the planets. The majority of the varied

range of programmes are well planned to maximise the young people's participation, learning and development. In several of the sessions observed, the young people worked well collectively, interpreting information and expressing their views and listening to the views of others

4.1.3 The junior members respond positively to the well-structured, high energy activity programmes, including street games, dance and rock climbing. The purpose-built climbing wall is used well to develop teamwork among the young people, to help them listen to and follow instructions, to improve their fitness, and to set and achieve their personal targets. The qualified tutor provides very good instruction and plans well for the young people to achieve the relevant skills and knowledge in a progressive manner.

4.1.4 The senior members develop very good leadership and social skills and make a significant contribution to the running of the centre. They accept responsibility for their own learning, participate fully through their support for other members, and use the transferable skills in other contexts, including formal education. They articulate the value of their learning through their involvement in specific training courses including health, personal development and sport. The full-time youth worker needs to record the benefit of these programmes to the young people and to make more strategic connections with the formal education and employment sectors.

4.2 QUALITY OF PROVISION

The quality of the provision for learning is good

4.2.1 The quality of the youth work practice observed ranged from satisfactory to very good; almost all of the sessions were evaluated as being good or better. The good range of relevant and innovative programmes is matched well to the identified needs of the young people. These programmes promote health and well-being through physical activities, and self-confidence through a combination of issue-based group work and general activities.

4.2.2 Almost 200 young people have successfully completed relevant training courses in the past 12 months. A core group of ten senior members is currently completing accredited leadership courses in youth work and sport development. There is a need to increase the opportunity for accredited and recognised training for senior members. (See appendix 2)

4.2.3 The staff plan their programmes carefully and communicate clearly the purpose of each session to the young people. The sessions observed were well paced and enjoyable, with good learning outcomes which supported the young people's personal and social development. The staff provide the young people with good opportunities to express their views informally and to offer suggestions for future programmes and experiences. The full-time youth worker and the staff need to analyse more effectively the good evidence from the young people's written and oral evaluations in order to assess the outcomes for the young people. There is a need to provide more formalised structures for participation, which support more effectively the young people's contribution to the planning and implementation of the programmes and to the newly-established advisory committee.

4.2.4 During the inspection there was a good balance of general activities and specific programmes: over one-half of the sessions evaluated involved good quality formal group work. The range of the social issues explored and discussed included: sexual health, issues affecting young men, parenting and drug education and the planning for a celebratory event.

4.3 THE QUALITY OF THE PASTORAL CARE IS VERY GOOD

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. The agreed standards of behaviour and discipline are well reflected in the respect the young people have for their environment, the staff and visitors. The staff support well those young people who are experiencing some difficulty in managing their behaviour; in addition, they have developed appropriate strategies to support each other. 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.

4.4 SAFEGUARDING

The centre has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education

4.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is good.

4.5.1 Through her very good curricular leadership and good management, the FTYW ensures high quality provision which meets the needs of the young people. She has established and sustains very good working relationships with the staff, the young people and their parents. She has accurately identified the need to provide more formal supervision and support for the staff.

4.5.2 The area youth officer monitors and evaluates the annual plan through regular formal unit visits, and support and supervision meetings. The format of this document does not capture sufficiently the outcomes of the planned programmes, and it lacks sufficient details regarding specific measurable targets. The area youth officer needs to use the supervision and support structure more effectively to provide feedback on his analysis and evaluation of the work of the centre.

4.5.3 The current quality assurance process is not demonstrating clearly enough the good learning outcomes for the young people. The full-time youth worker has accurately identified the need to demonstrate more effectively the young people's achievements, and to analyse further the relevant data to identify the trends and patterns of attendance and retention more accurately. The area youth officer and the FTYW need to implement fully the BELB's quality assurance procedures and to include more measurable targets in the annual plan.

4.5.4 The full-time youth worker has established good strategic links with relevant local youth and community groups, including: the Upper Springfield Community Safety Team, the centre for Health and Well-Being and the Falls Community Council. She makes effective use of the relevant expertise and experience of these organisations to facilitate well-planned issue-based programmes which extend the young people's skills and knowledge. The worker needs to continue to monitor the quality of all of the external programmes and to utilise these opportunities to build the capacity of the staff team to deliver similar programmes.

4.5.5 Almost all of the staff understand the role and purpose of youth work as a result of good in-centre training and support. They have completed relevant youth work qualifications, including those staff who are qualified in rock climbing, kayaking and dance. The staff team, many of whom are past members, provide good support and challenge for the new and emerging leaders.

5. CONCLUSION

The quality of youth provision provided by Matt Talbot youth centre is good; the centre has important strengths in most of its youth work 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 area for improvement.

The main area for improvement is the need for:

- the area youth officer and the full-time youth worker need to implement fully the BELB's quality assurance procedures and to include measurable targets in the unit plan.

APPENDIX 1

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

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	13	31	43	42	3	2	2	0		136
2009/10	34	29	48	70	5	2	2	0		190
2010/11	28	21	55	60	2	1	2	0		169
2011/12	40	16	35	32	1	1	1	0		126

APPENDIX 2

Leadership training and other courses provided for young people and youth workers in the youth centre from September 2010)

Title of course including accreditation details	Number of young people enrolled	Number of adults enrolled	Percentage successfully completed
NIOCN Introduction to Youth Work		3	66%
Child Protection		10	100%
First Aid		6	100%
Disability Training		2	100%
Suicide Awareness	12	1	100%
Trauma Training		1	100%
Sexual Health (HYPE)	12		100%
Rock Climbing	26		100%
Circuit Training	13		100%
Sign Language	14		100%
Indian Culture Awareness	14		100%
Stranger Danger	17		100%
Health Hygiene and Cookery	24		100%
Drug and Alcohol Awareness	11		100%
Parenting-Virtual Babies Training	14		100%
Circus Skills	12		100%
Young Men's Work	10		100%
NIOCN Level 1 Sports Leadership	7		Ongoing
NIOCN Level 1 Youth	7		Ongoing
Total	183	23	

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