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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of an Inspection**

#### **Southern Education and Library Board**

#### **Youth Provision in the**

#### **Craigavon/Banbridge Area**

**Inspected: October/November 2008**

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## 1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The youth service in the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) and the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) have been working collaboratively since 2006 under the direct management of an Assistant Senior Education Officer and a Deputy Youth Adviser appointed in each ELB area. The Craigavon and Banbridge area is one of three divisions within the SELB youth service and is managed directly by an Area Youth Officer (AYO). The youth provision includes seven full-time youth centres, one youth and community centre in partnership with Craigavon District Council, two youth centres attached to post-primary schools, one part-time controlled youth centre and a young adult centre, mostly staffed by professionally qualified youth workers. The area youth office also provides a scheme of assistance to 148 registered youth groups. The total core budget for the Craigavon and Banbridge area is approximately £1 million.

1.2 There are 12 full-time youth workers and two senior youth workers. The senior youth workers provide youth work training courses, support part-time units and develop participatory structures for young people. A youth worker, employed by Lurgan Junior High School was appointed recently with a specific remit for the South Lurgan area. The youth worker is school-based for 10% of the time, and spends the remaining 90% on youth work. The provision in the Craigavon and Banbridge area is further supported by 118 paid part-time youth workers and 1,910 volunteers.

1.3 There are effective links with the SELB Inclusion and Participation Officers, who make a valuable contribution to the good range and quality of provision across the division. These officers have specific responsibility for promoting the inclusion of all young people within the SELB and providing structures to enable the young people to be actively involved in the life and work of their youth organisations. The expertise of a Health Promotion officer, through a partnership arrangement between the SELB and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, is well used in training youth workers to support the young people's emotional and mental well-being (see Appendix 1).

1.4 The two council areas of Craigavon and Banbridge have a combined population of over 122,000. The area is predominantly urban although 30% of the population live in rural areas. In Craigavon an outreach worker is employed to respond to the specific needs within the rural areas. At the time of the inspection this post had just been filled. In Banbridge the senior youth worker and the area youth worker support rural initiatives.

### Population of Children and Young People by Age Band and Local Government District

Council Area	4-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	18-25 yrs	Total
Banbridge	2,998	3,162	1,880	3,515	11,555
Craigavon	6,273	5,165	3,929	6,713	22,080
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,271</b>	<b>8,327</b>	<b>5,809</b>	<b>10,228</b>	<b>33,635</b>

Over 13,000 (13,560) children and young people aged between four and 25 years are registered with youth groups in the Craigavon and Banbridge area which represents 40% of the youth population in the area (see Appendix 2). This percentage compares favourably with the associated target in the Programme for Government that, by 2008, 42% of the youth population will be members of youth service organisations.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 A range of well-conceived projects and initiatives provides valuable educational and personal development opportunities for the participants. A Civic Link programme, co-provided by a full-time youth worker and a teacher, allows a group of young people from a post-primary school to develop their research skills and team-work, and their awareness of citizenship within their local school and community.

2.2 The SELB has invested significant resources to support the development of youth councils in order to develop the fuller participation of young people in their communities. The youth team has introduced new terms of references for the youth councils to ensure greater consistency across the ELB area. The young people develop good team-working skills through, for example, setting, sharing and reviewing targets; they have useful opportunities to assume a leadership role; and they demonstrate good levels of critical thinking and reflection. The members of the youth councils value the opportunities both for their personal development and as a progression route to other programmes.

2.3 The Participation Officer manages the Organisational Change Programme which sets out to develop a culture of participation and participatory practice within youth centres. This process is facilitated by the Big Deal<sup>1</sup> staff, the SELB Participation Unit and staff from the specific youth centre. Through the good planning and preparation by the youth worker and the Big Deal facilitator, the young people experience the challenge of designing and implementing a participation strategy within their youth organisation. They develop further the skills of working together as a team, communication and decision-making.

2.4 A number of youth workers provide accredited personal development programmes for groups of students from four post-primary schools. During 2007-08 eleven students received level 1 accreditation in the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE). This programme takes place in one of the local youth centres; more than half of the young people involved in the COPE programme have since availed of other youth service provision within the local area.

2.5 A group of young people in North Lurgan are working towards a locally recognised SELB certificate in senior member leadership. The course develops the young people's confidence and provides a forum for them to take on leadership roles in their community. Most of the group plans to work towards the nationally recognised Open College Network (OCN) part-time certificate for youth workers.

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<sup>1</sup> The Big Deal is a £4 million initiative funded through the Big Lottery Fund under its Northern Ireland Young People's Fund programme. The Big Deal programme is about encouraging children and young people to get involved in making decisions that affect them and others in youth groups, schools, families and communities across Northern Ireland.

2.6 The Xtreme FM radio programme promotes successfully the inclusion of young people with a range of ability and interests and the increased participation of young people who are marginalised. The young people reported their increase in self-confidence; the development of new organisational and planning skills through broadcasting increases their employability. The youth workers make effective use of peer educators who care effectively for their peers with additional needs, and benefit from their involvement. The achievements of young people with additional needs are impressive and illustrate the benefits for all the young people participating in an inclusive and exciting project.

2.7 The seventh annual Visions 4 2Moro youth conference for young people aged 15-19 years took place for six days during July 2008. This conference is organised by a steering group which consists of young people between the ages of 15-19 years from across the three divisional areas in the SELB with the support of senior youth workers. New participants learn from more experienced members of the steering group by shadowing them; they then, in turn, assume leadership roles. This innovative project actively engages young people in developing their ability to participate and organise: the young people take the lead role in the planning, the implementation and, at times, the delivery of workshops. There is a high level of participation in this unique experience with appropriate themes chosen each year by the young people; 85 young people participated in this year's conference representing a range of Section 75 Groups.

2.8 The senior member training course offered in conjunction with Enable NI, a local voluntary organisation that promotes inclusion for young adults with a disability, is another example of the inclusive ethos of the SELB. This accredited course prepares the young adults well to contribute to other clubs for young people with disabilities throughout the area. The delivery is creative and innovative providing for the range of ability and need. The young adults develop their communication skills and self-esteem giving them greater confidence to engage with their peers and contribute to their local community.

2.9 The Youthbank project allows young people to administer a small amount of money to community organisations. The young people develop their decision-making skills: they decide the criteria for the selection of projects, they meet and have discussions with people from other backgrounds, and they have the opportunity to explore different ideas. In a well-planned session the youth worker supported the young people in rigorously exploring the issues involved in making good decisions.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION**

3.1 The quality of the provision observed ranged from satisfactory to very good; in a quarter of all sessions observed the practice was very good. In the best practice, the youth workers planned and delivered an enjoyable and stimulating learning experience. The approaches were matched well to the young people's needs and abilities and there was mutual respect between the young people and youth workers. There was also evidence of good team teaching in a school-based project which enhanced the experience for the young people and had mutual benefits for the youth worker and teacher.

3.2 The planning for almost all sessions was very good, characterised by short-term and longer term learning objectives which set out clearly the intended progression and development for the young people. In a small minority of sessions the planning was unrealistic and lacked sufficient detail and preparation. In the larger projects the planning was highly effective and detailed, there was good involvement of the young people in the evaluation of the outcomes and the activities were tailored well to the individual needs of the young people.

3.3 There is a very good range of accredited and non-accredited programmes and courses for the young people, and both professional and unqualified youth workers. An excellent annual training booklet is produced offering 29 training courses including Senior Member Training, Peer Education Programmes, Child Protection, Disability, Drug Education and Mental Health Awareness and the OCN training for youth workers. A training session for youth workers doing an OCN part-time certificate was observed during the inspection; it was well planned and met effectively the experience and the needs of the group; there was good support from a part-time tutor. Almost all of the participants have been involved in other training opportunities and are encouraged to complete this nationally recognised part-time youth work certificate. There is good uptake in all courses by the young people and the workers with resulting benefits in the overall work of the division.

3.4 The SELB have established good communication with a range of relevant partners and stakeholders. They make effective use of their expertise to further improve the quality of services for young people. The AYO has been strategic in developing active partnerships that have enhanced the provision for those young people with specific needs, for example, young travellers, young people living in the rural community and young people with learning disabilities. A recent example is the Aspergers' Project which was organised and supported by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, the SELB Youth Service Inclusion Unit, the SELB Creative Youth Partnership and the sports section of Craigavon Borough Council. This project provided good opportunities for eight young people with Asperger's syndrome to participate in art and sport taster sessions. This group were supported by 'buddies' from Taghnevan Youth Centre throughout the project.

3.5 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in almost all of the youth groups is very good with mutual respect among the young people and between the young people and staff. There is good provision for young people with additional needs and for those from ethnic backgrounds. In almost all of the group work sessions observed there were agreed high standards of behaviour and discipline. In the discussions held with young people almost all stated that they felt safe and knew whom to approach for help in the case of child protection or behavioural matters.

3.6 The SELB has effective procedures to deal with any incidents raised. The organisations visited had in place satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding children and young people. All of the part-time and full-time staff have received recent child protection training. The SELB provides a rolling programme of child protection training for the voluntary sector; it is compulsory for all workers engaging in 'controlled and regulated' activity, as defined by the 2007 safeguarding legislation. Specific training is provided for designated child protection officers within each organisation and is also made available to the designated officer for child protection on voluntary management committees.

## **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

4.1 The overall quality of the strategic leadership and management within the division is very good. The AYO and the youth team demonstrate a commitment to excellence and quality improvement at all levels. There is clear and open communication between all staff and management in development planning.

4.2 There is a coherent planning process which is informed by the overall SELB and WELB business plan and overseen by the AYO. The aims of the area plan drawn up by the AYO influence the three-year development plans submitted by each full-time youth worker, and the subsequent yearly action plans (see Appendix 3). In consultation with young people and local communities, the youth workers set out the extent and quality of the service that they plan to deliver for the incoming year based on the assessed needs of the local community. Each full-time youth worker evaluates his or her own development plan on an annual basis and centre-based youth workers produce an annual report. The AYO monitors progress against the respective development plans through regular supervision, quarterly reports and moderation. There is a need to interpret and use more effectively the range of data and information gathered by the individual staff, and to continue the development of self-evaluation.

4.3 The youth work staff are experienced and appropriately qualified and demonstrate well their expertise in leadership and management responsibilities. The SELB provides regular and useful opportunities for the staff to undertake continuous professional development. The AYO makes effective use of performance reviews to meet staff development needs.

4.4 Members of the inspection team met with a focus group which was representative of the registered units across the area. All of the representatives were unanimous in their appreciation of the quality and level of support available through the youth office. In particular, they commended the work of the administrative staff, the senior youth workers and the AYO. The part-time registered units stated their satisfaction with the effective communication systems and the good personal support which they receive. They also appreciate the availability and the good quality of child protection training and youth work training courses.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 The strengths of the organisation include:

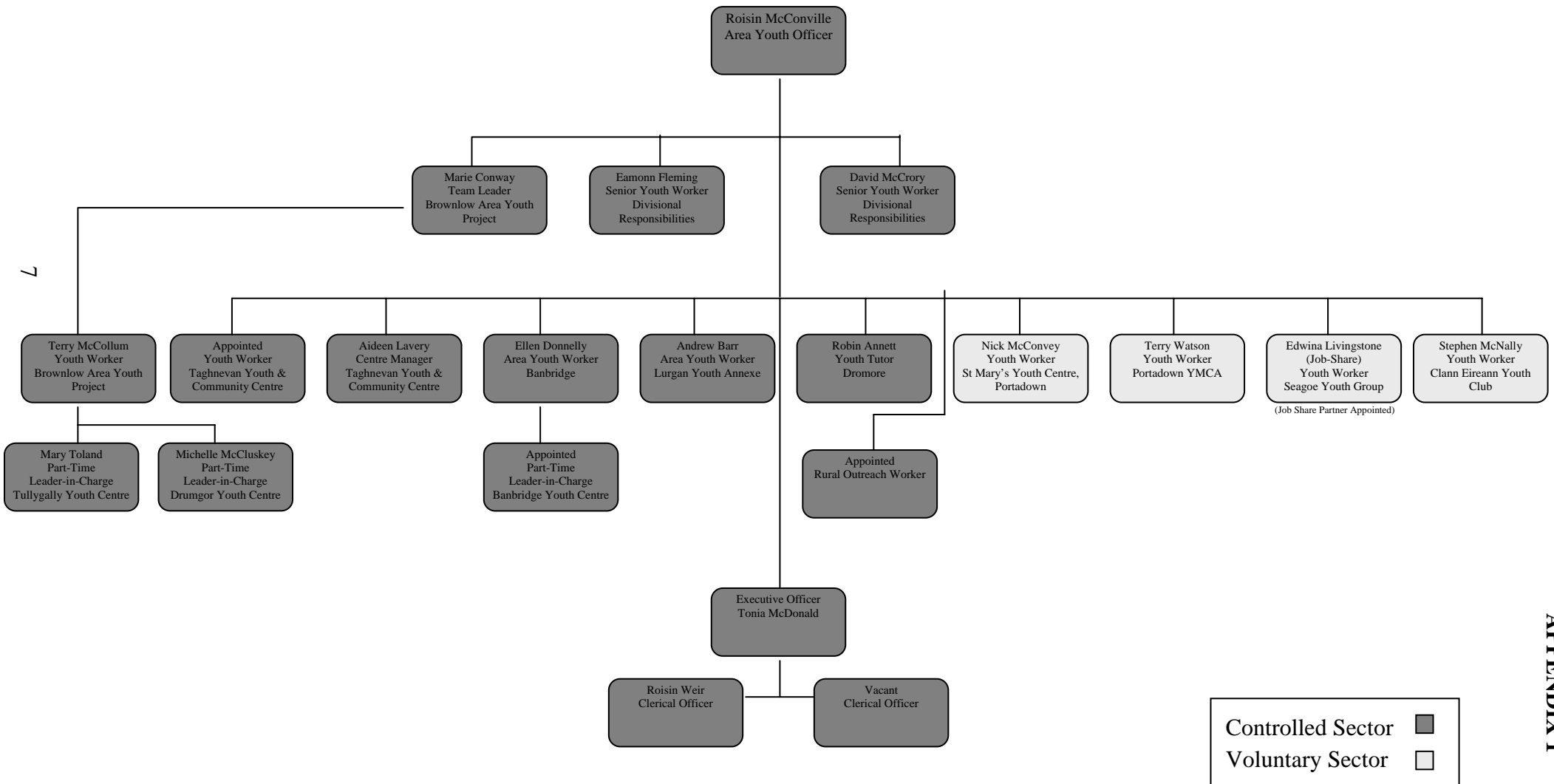
- the very good quality of the outcomes for the young people across almost all of the projects and youth groups visited, that lead to the acquisition and development of new skills including opportunities to progress to leadership;
- the very good range of programmes and, in some instances, accredited courses in almost all of the organisations visited that provide the young people with the necessary skills to contribute positively to their own units and to the wider community;
- the effective range of youth work approaches that are well-matched to the young people's different interests, needs and abilities;

- the commitment of the AYO in the SELB and the youth work staff to the core principles of participation and inclusion that contribute to the development of social awareness and employability;
- the good links with other officers within the SELB and with relevant agencies, and the effective use of their expertise to further improve the quality of services for young people in the area; and
- the effective and coherent strategic management and leadership that gives clear direction and good support to its staff to achieve high standards of youth provision in the area.

5.2 In the areas inspected the quality of youth work provided by the SELB youth service in the Craigavon and Banbridge division 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.



# Organisation Chart Craigavon/Banbridge Area Youth Service



Controlled Sector   
 Voluntary Sector

**Total Membership Figures for Craigavon and Banbridge 2007-2008**

<b>2007-08</b>	<b>4-9 yrs</b>	<b>10-12 yrs</b>	<b>13-15 yrs</b>	<b>16-18 yrs</b>	<b>19+ yrs</b>	<b>Total</b>
Male	1,999	1,708	1,623	882	292	6,504
Female	2,453	1,918	1,533	777	380	7,061
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,452</b> (33%)	<b>3,626</b> (27%)	<b>3,156</b> (23%)	<b>1,659</b> (12%)	<b>672</b> (5%)	<b>13,565</b>

Over 13,000 (13,560) children and young people are currently registered with youth groups in the Craigavon and Banbridge area. This indicates that 40% of children and young people between the age of 4-25 years within the Craigavon and Banbridge area attend registered youth groups.

## APPENDIX 3

The aims of the Area Plan are to:

- promote participation throughout the area and develop good models of innovative participative practice;
- increase and build on the opportunities for young people experiencing marginalisation to participate in the youth service;
- assess the quality of services being delivered to young people;
- address gaps in the service;
- improve the skills and performance of full-time youth workers;
- provide a comprehensive training programme for the youth service in the area;  
and
- promote positive images of the youth service within the area.

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