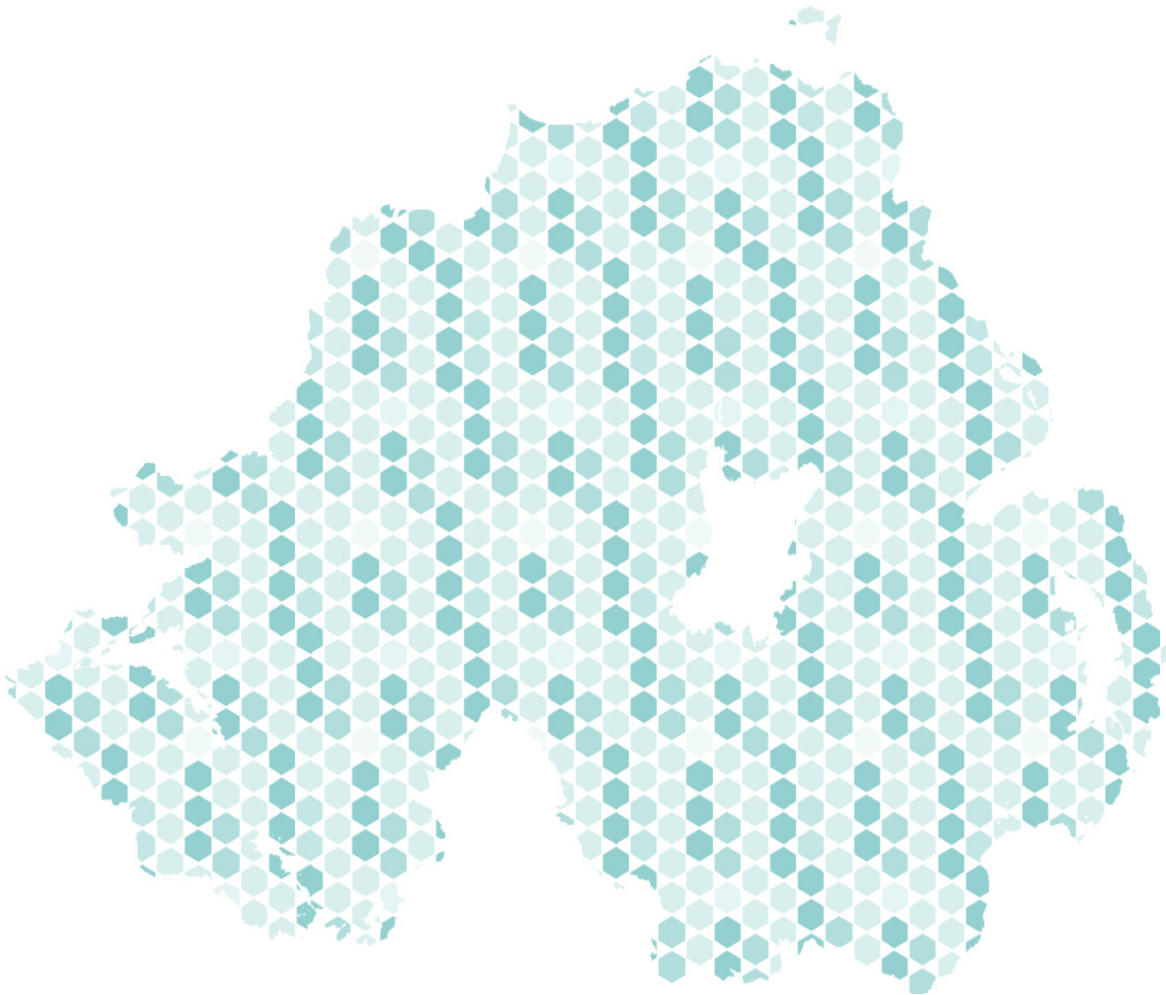


# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Woodhall Residential Centre,  
Kilrea

Report of an Inspection  
in March 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**

SYO	Senior Youth Officer
NEELB	North-Eastern Education and Library Board

## 1. CONTEXT

1.1 Woodhall Residential Centre (Woodhall) is located in a former gentleman's residence, close to the town of Kilrea. The centre was opened in 1978 and is funded primarily by the NEELB youth service. In recent years, the centre received additional funding from the Big Lottery for a ropes course and a 'Wilderness Village'<sup>1</sup>. The acting warden, who is a long-standing member of the staff, is assisted by eleven support staff including part-time outdoor education instructors.

1.2 The centre has residential accommodation for 38 people and is used primarily by youth organisations at the weekends and schools during the week for either day sessions or overnight residential visits. According to the data collated by the organisation, approximately fifty percent of the usage of the centre is by school groups and fifty percent by youth organisations from the NEELB area. The NEELB youth service meets all of the recurrent costs of the centre and all participants contribute a reasonable amount to the cost of the accommodation.

1.3 The centre's mission statement, "to provide a range of curriculum related training services, which places an emphasis on the personal and social development of school pupils and youth groups," is clearly evident in Woodhall. The experiences of the adult and young participants at Woodhall are evaluated consistently to ensure that the principles of the mission statement are realised and, most importantly, recognised by those attending.

1.4 The centre has agreed targets for occupancy rates with the NEELB, which it has well exceeded over the last three years. The data collated by the staff and the SYO with responsibility for the overall management of the centre has been used effectively to inform business planning.

## 2. FOCUS

2.1 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

**3.1 The quality of provision in Woodhall Residential Centre is outstanding.** The quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The centre has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> The Wilderness Village is a camping without tents site, located away from the main centre. It has four wooden pod shelters and a central barbeque area.

## 4. KEY FINDINGS

### 4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

#### **The quality of the young people's achievements and standards is outstanding.**

4.1.1 The young people demonstrate high levels of motivation and enjoyment; they accept responsibility readily and make confident decisions in the range of activities. They make significant progress to develop their personal and social skills, and support and encourage their peers to overcome their fears in challenging situations.

4.1.2 The young people understand clearly the connections between their formal and non-formal education experiences. They articulate well the impact of the experiences at Woodhall, and they understand clearly the contribution that these experiences make to their learning in school. Through the excellent support from the staff, they demonstrate how to manage information effectively, solve problems collectively, and seek and give appropriate peer support.

4.1.3 Consistently, the young people respond with enthusiasm to the instructors, teachers and youth workers; they show a very good disposition to learn, and demonstrate perseverance and an excellent use of their initiative. In all of the sessions observed, the young people planned for, and reviewed, their progress and that of their peers.

4.1.4 The young people demonstrate clear progression in their knowledge, skills and understanding of outdoor environments. They use the specialist equipment safely in challenging situations and take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. The young people understand the need to look after others, to trust each other and to enjoy sharing new experiences; consequently, they develop more meaningful friendships with their peers. In discussions with them, they stated that they value the support from their peers and the staff to help them to achieve their best.

4.1.5 The strong commitment by the staff to fulfilling their mission statement is evident in the competent manner in which the young people set their own targets. The young people participate at a level commensurate with their ability and make significant progress to achieve their personal best. In some of the more challenging activities, such as the ropes course, the young people work at their own pace; they take responsibility to set and extend their own challenges; and, they experience immense satisfaction when they achieve their goals

### 4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING

#### **The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding.**

4.2.1 The centre has a welcoming and caring ethos. All of the staff give excellent attention to the diverse needs of the young people. They provide a range of activities which meet effectively their varied interests and learning styles.

4.2.2 The quality of the sessions observed ranged from good to outstanding; most of the sessions observed were of a very good or better standard. The centre provides an excellent range of challenging and enjoyable programmes, which are well planned and matched to the needs and abilities of all of the users. The staff have high expectations of the young people; and the activities build progressively on their existing knowledge and skills.

4.2.3 The highly experienced, enthusiastic and skilled instructors establish quickly excellent working relationships with the teachers, the youth workers and the young people. The staff team works together effectively to promote and maintain a high quality, challenging learning environment for all of the participants. There are excellent working relationships at all levels.

4.2.4 The young people are encouraged to express their opinions, to develop team-work and to take on leadership roles. The instructors demonstrate an excellent ability to adapt and differentiate activities, and to provide an appropriate level of challenge for the individual needs of the young people. They inspire confidence in the young people and the accompanying adults, and use effective questioning to challenge, encourage, and support the young people as they progress through the tasks.

4.2.5 The quality of the pastoral care for the young people who attend the centre is outstanding. The young people reported that they feel safe in the centre and in the outdoor activities, and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

#### 4.3 SAFEGUARDING

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

#### 4.4 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

##### **The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.**

4.4.1 There is a consistent commitment to excellence and improvement by staff all levels of the provision. In particular, the outstanding leadership of the SYO ensures that there is rigorous ongoing review and evaluation to promote improvement in the best interests of the young people. The centre is supported, managed and maintained to a high standard by the NEELB youth service.

4.4.2 The current staff team is enthusiastic, hard-working, and committed to the holistic development of the young people. The temporary warden is a highly experienced staff member who provides highly effective leadership and has a clear vision for the future development of the centre. The centre has a well-developed culture of self-evaluation, which is evident in the strategic planning of NEELB managers, and also in the reflections and discussions led by staff during the individual activities.

4.4.3 The evaluations from the schools and youth organisations using Woodhall are wholly positive and almost all refer to the excellent support from staff at all levels, and the personal, social and educational benefits to the young people.

4.4.4 The centre has an excellent range of effective and mutually beneficial partnerships with the user groups and other relevant stakeholders, to best meet the needs of the young people using the centre. The excellent link with the NEELB Curriculum Advisory and Support Service has enhanced the knowledge of the staff of the Northern Ireland curriculum for primary and post-primary schools.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of provision in Woodhall Residential Centre is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The centre has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- The centre managers have identified appropriately that the showers on the ground floor are in poor condition and require improvement.



## APPENDIX 2

**Table 1: Number of Nights Occupied April 2010-March 2011**

Type of Visit	Young People	Adults	Total
Midweek	3,491	584	4,075
Weekend	888	423	1,311
Total	4,379	1,007	5,386

**Table2: Number of Activity Sessions April 2010-March 2011**

Type of Visit	Young People	Adults	Total
Day	8,321	1,493	9,814
Midweek	11,062	1,624	12,686
Weekend	3,410	1,402	4,812
Total	22,793	4,519	27,312

**Table 3: User Data April 2010-March 2011**

Type of Visit	Female (young people)	Male (young people)	Adult	Total no. of users
Day	2,615	2,673	973	6,261
Midweek	615	633	181	1,429
Weekend	267	260	238	765
Total	3,497	3,566	1,392	8,455

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