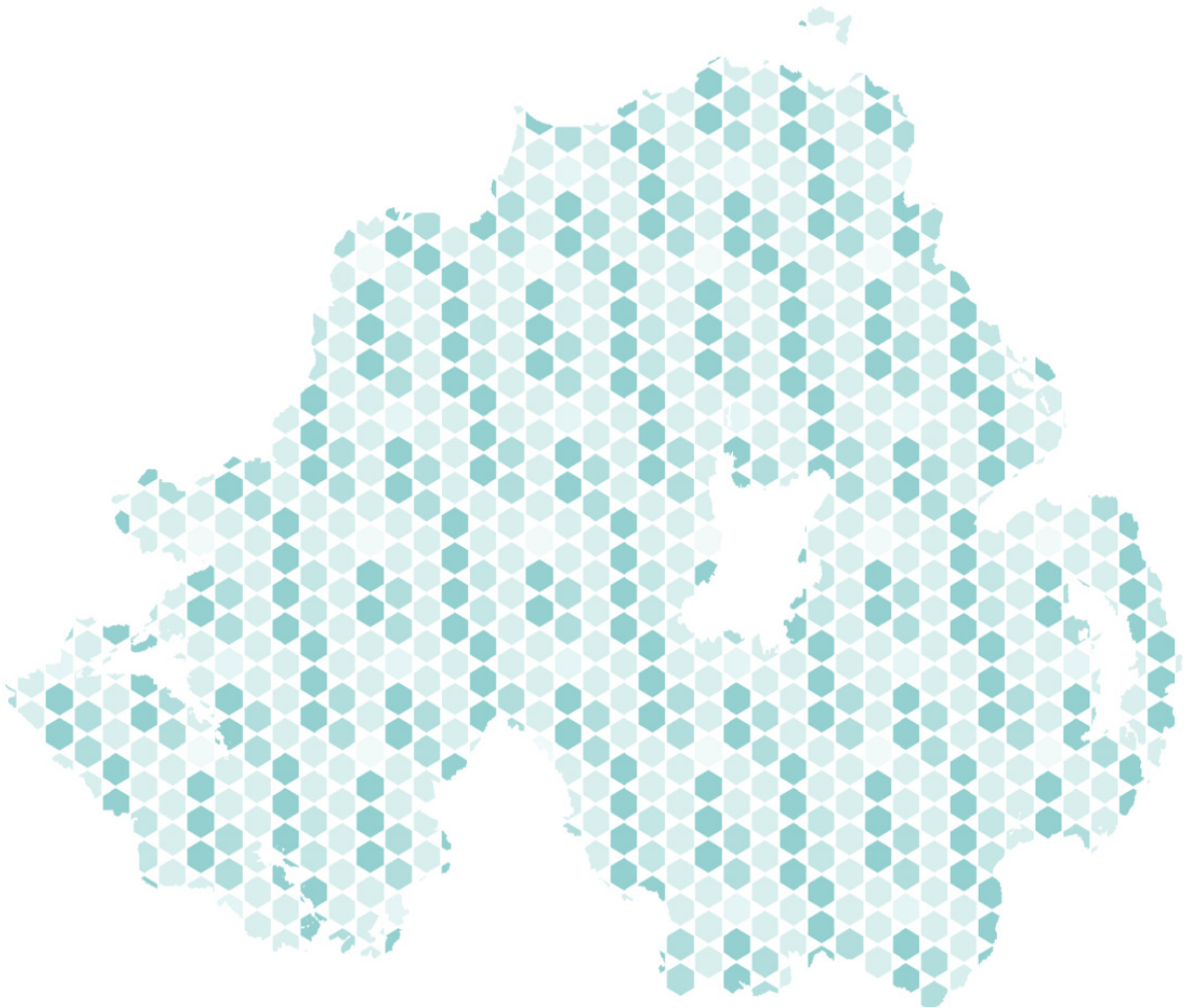


YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

North-Eastern Education and
Library Board Youth Provision
in the Coleraine Area

Report of an Inspection
in November/December 2010

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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

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Coleraine is one of the youth divisions within the Coleraine, Ballymoney and Magherafelt area of the North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). The area is managed by an Area Youth Officer (AYO), who has been in post for six years. She is supported in her management of statutory and voluntary youth provision within the Coleraine division, by a Senior Youth Worker (SYW), for whom she has line management responsibility. In addition, there is a cohort of area-based youth workers, who are managed separately at NEELB level, by a Senior Youth Officer for projects (SYO projects).

1.2 Figures supplied by the organisation indicate that the area has a population of 18,633 young people aged 4-25 years. Approximately 5,071 young people attend the 73 registered units, including the three youth centres and the area projects (see appendix 1). Most of the youth work is provided by part-time voluntary and uniformed organisations. Three centres, managed by leaders employed for 24 hours each week, provide the statutory youth provision; two are under the direct management of the NEELB youth service and the third is a jointly managed provision with the Coleraine Borough Council.

1.3 The total youth membership for registered groups has remained stable in recent years. The figures indicate that a majority of the young people who attend the youth provision in Coleraine are under 16 years and are members of part-time voluntary youth units. The large centres and full-time youth workers work with a minority of the overall registered membership. The NEELB youth service has identified key priority areas which include supporting marginalised young people and supporting young people in their transition to adulthood. The figures indicate that 8% of the total membership are involved in well-targeted outreach and detached provision. The total membership of the three youth centres represents 15% of the overall membership within the 73 registered groups. No information was available on the length of membership in the three youth centres, the area projects or the Coleraine youth council.

Table 1: Total membership

Age group	4 – 9 years		10 -15 years		16 – 18 years		19 + years		Numbers involved in outreach/ detached	TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2008/09	641	939	1,151	1,111	229	210	87	57	360	4,785
2009/10	686	997	1,160	1,216	234	231	104	80	311	4,919
2010/11	681	965	1,132	1,199	274	226	116	67	411	5,071

2. FOCUS

2.1 The inspection focused on: the efficacy of leadership and management of the youth service at ELB, area and individual centre level; the quality of provision; and the achievements and standards of the young people in the Coleraine area.

2.2 The inspection team observed the work of all of the full-time staff and two of the centre leaders; because of poor weather conditions the sample of directly-observed practice was restricted. Meetings and discussions also took place with the acting Assistant Senior Education Officer and the two SYOs, one with responsibility for staff training, the other for projects. Members of the inspection team had discussions and meetings with the AYO, all of the full-time staff, the centre leaders and members of the teaching staff, including the Principals, of the two schools visited. The AYO made arrangements for representatives from

ten registered part-time youth organisations to meet members of the inspection team. The inspection team examined a range of documentation provided by the organisation, including the area implementation plan, service level agreements, projects proposals, evidence files and records of monitoring visits.

2.3 Discussions took place with 20 young people in four different locations in relation to their health and well-being, the arrangements for safeguarding, and the quality of youth provision.

3 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

3.1 The strategic leadership and management of the NEELB youth service and in the Coleraine area is good. The NEELB youth provision within the Coleraine area is managed effectively by the AYO and SYW (Coleraine). The NEELB youth work strategy is underpinned appropriately by six key principles which provide a sound basis for the development of youth work. A series of overarching strategic documents sets out broad and appropriate aims for the work of the NEELB youth service and includes a list of priorities which are relevant to meeting the needs of the young people in the Coleraine area. There is, however, a lack of sufficient coherence within these strategic documents to inform adequately the implementation plan for the Coleraine staff team.

3.2 The NEELB youth service continues to review and develop the efficacy of the management of the current staffing structures through which the area-based staff and the project-based staff are managed in two separate divisions. They wish to ensure that there is more effective communication and that the deployment of the staff is better matched to the needs of the young people and the scope of the youth work. In particular, the AYO needs to be able to draw further on the expertise of other NEELB youth staff who are deployed in the Projects Division. Senior managers have identified appropriately the need for bi-monthly meetings in each division to review and target the provision for the young people in identified areas of need and to respond to local issues. The Coleraine Peace Programme is a good illustration of this improved process. The AYO identified rising community tensions and made good use of the expertise within the NEELB youth service to scope the range of the issues and to begin to identify an appropriate response within current resources.

3.3 The Coleraine staff team has established good strategic links with relevant government agencies, including the Department of Social Development (DSD), to help address specific needs within the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas of Ballysally and Churchlands. The staff team has used well the analysis of relevant statistics and their good working relationships and contacts with statutory agencies and other youth providers to identify and prioritise the needs of the young people and their communities. For example, the team secured significant additional resources to meet the growing needs and demands of the young people. In 2009-2010, the DSD allocated almost £37,000 to the area youth office to target the health and well-being of young people, in the 11-14 age group, in Ballysally and Churchlands. The area team made good use of the sports department in the University of Ulster Coleraine campus to provide coaching, and the area team provided relevant work shops to promote and sustain a healthy lifestyle. The team has worked effectively to identify key priorities, including building capacity in the local community, to respond to the needs of the young people, and to develop young people as leaders. There is nevertheless, inadequate detail of the intended outcomes for the young people in the planning documents for these projects.

3.4 The AYO uses well the current quality assurance systems to record relevant data. However, there is insufficient use of this data to evaluate and to record the young people's progression and achievement, and to inform future planning.

3.5 The SYO (projects) has developed a model of youth work in schools in response to the needs of the young people in the Coleraine area. Two area youth workers are deployed one day a week, in two post-primary schools, to provide support for individual and small groups of young people. The area team leader uses his local knowledge well to inform his staff team and to sustain good and effective working relationships with the schools. The schools value the good contribution of the youth workers and their ability to engage and relate to the young people. Based partly on the experience of their work with the youth service, one school is currently developing a 'concern register' to collate the pastoral issues for all young people. The NEELB is not analysing sufficiently the extent to which the support from the non-formal sector is building capacity within schools and complementing the many other support services provided for the young people. There are inadequate monitoring and evaluation processes to track and record the young people's progress, including any improvement in their educational achievements and standards.

3.6 The leader of Sunlea youth centre demonstrates excellent leadership. She lives in the local community, knows the needs of the young people well and has established very good links with the community organisations and the local schools. The young people benefit well from her hard work and determination, and are offered the widest possible range of opportunities and experiences within current resources. Her creative and innovative strategic approach to planning programmes enables the young people to develop a range of skills, aptitudes and abilities for their personal benefit and for the benefit of the community. The strong partnerships, with a wide network of organisations and individuals, help to enrich and extend the young people's aspirations. The centre leader places a high priority on staff development and supports the staff well to reflect on and improve their youth work practice.

3.7 The well-qualified staff team in the Coleraine division has a good range of relevant experience and expertise. The NEELB makes good provision for continuous professional development, including professional qualifications in management. The learning and development cycle is based on clearly defined learning needs. There is a good range of mandatory training and additional courses to support all full-time staff in their management role and to respond appropriately to the needs of the young people. Further opportunities should be developed to support staff at all levels to analyse, evaluate and record more effectively the progress and outcomes for young people participating in youth programmes.

4. QUALITY OF PROVISION

4.1 The support for youth provision in those organisations registered with the NEELB is good. Each organisation completes a curriculum agreement annually that reflects appropriately the needs of their members. The recently introduced SLA for larger registered units demonstrates well the extent and range of their provision. The youth centres operate two afternoons and four evenings each week and complete the more comprehensive, annual SLA document. The SYW (Coleraine) makes good use of these documents to monitor the quality of the provision and provides the AYO with useful regular feedback to help inform the planning for active participation. However, there is a need for more evaluative commentary on the progress of projects, and the outcomes achieved by the young people.

4.2 The SYW (Coleraine) provides good support for the young people's participation and involvement in a wide range of relevant programmes. At a sub-group meeting of the Coleraine youth council, members of the inspection team observed a highly articulate group of young people actively involved in developing their participation skills through the good planning of a music event. The young people identified appropriately the need to encourage a wider representation of their peers on the youth council.

4.3 The staff team collaborates effectively with a number of partner agencies, including the Coleraine Borough Council, Coleraine Rural Urban Network and the international young leaders' programme, to promote greater participation across a wide range of young people. The Coleraine Borough Council allocates resources to the NEELB youth service to help deliver a youth citizenship project. The key purpose of the project is to bring together rural young people to meet their local councillors through the use of the NEELB mobile youth unit. In 2009, 38 young people attended the 12 planned sessions, met with three local councillors and were able to express their views on resources and their needs as young constituents. In the session observed during the inspection, the group of young people did not use the mobile youth unit or engage at any significant level with the experienced part-time staff. The staff leading the session indicated that the key purpose of bringing the young people and the councillors together would be met by the third visit.

4.4 The area youth workers provide good support and opportunities for those young people who feel that they do not have their voices heard, to comment on and participate in aspects of their local community. For example, the preparation for the 'Ask Us' conference illustrates well how, at the request of the Borough Council, the area youth workers support the young people in the development of new knowledge and skills. A group of eight young people from across the area, who do not normally have such an opportunity, is preparing to ascertain and present the views of their peers to organisations such as: Coleraine Borough Council, the Police Service for Northern Ireland and the District Policing Partnership.

4.5. The Coleraine Peace Programme forms an integral part of the NEELB's response to the needs of a group of marginalised young people at risk of sectarian violence. The strategic approach involves a range of agencies which work together effectively. The progression within the programme meets well the needs of the young people through supporting their personal and social development. There is an effective blend of single-identity work, joint meetings and outings between the groups of young people. The participating young people are actively encouraged to think through situations and solutions for themselves. There is also a good balance between support and challenge, with discussions in various areas pertinent to the young people, such as the detrimental effect of too much alcohol on their behaviour.

4.6 The area youth workers demonstrate effective teamwork and there are good working relationships between the workers and the young people. The good joint planning of the youth workers was reflected in the sharing of responsibility during the sessions and the de-briefing sessions. The area youth workers continue to help the young people to review and evaluate their own behaviour, and to recognise any progress made by the group. Several of the young people have become involved in organising other youth programmes.

4.7 The area youth workers recognise the need to monitor more closely the young people's progress and to use self-evaluation more rigorously to measure achievement and progression and to inform better the strategic planning. The SYO (projects) has identified appropriately the need to review the deployment of the area workers to sustain the Coleraine Peace Programme.

4.8 The NEELB youth service recognises the importance of recording and using the data on the young people's achievements as a key area for development. The area team and the SYW with responsibility for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are working currently to develop further an ICT-based centre management system. It is well designed and assists centres to collate and analyse data in relation to membership and patterns of attendance more effectively. The youth service plans appropriately to use the system to recognise and record the progress of young people through the service as participants,

young leaders and volunteers. The centre leaders have taken a lead role in developing further a process for identifying opportunities for recording achievement within the youth centre environment. The 'Green Book' highlights eleven key areas of youth work and sets appropriate objectives and potential learning outcomes against each area.

4.9 The NEELB youth service has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The youth officer with responsibility for child protection provides an outstanding service to youth workers and young people across the area. Every statutory location has a comprehensive child protection folder containing appropriate and relevant safeguarding information that is monitored at least once a year. There is a clear code of conduct for all staff that provides a range of appropriate and comprehensive guidelines for the safeguarding of young people both in and out of centre.

4.10 Members of the Coleraine youth council have successfully completed child protection awareness training and three of the young people have completed the Child Exploitation and Online Protection training. The NEELB youth service has also developed a comprehensive list of 'Social Networking Guidelines' that offers practical advice that assist in exploring issues and acceptable online behaviour. All full-time staff have held discussions and contributed to the policy guidelines, currently out for consultation for quality impact assessment. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the area is very good.

5. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

5.1 The overall quality of achievements and standards is consistently good. Many of the young people from a range of backgrounds and with differing abilities develop greater confidence and self-esteem to express their viewpoint in a measured and informed way. Through their involvement in a range of forums and in issue-based projects, the young people acquire problem-solving skills. They have also gained a better understanding of themselves and of how they can make a positive contribution to their community. In the small number of sessions observed, the young people worked well with the youth workers and with their peers to listen to the views of others. As part of the preparation for the 'Ask Us' conference, the young people are being trained in the use of Quizdom technology to record the views of the participants with the expert support of the SYW (ICT). The young people are developing skills such as how to maintain the interest of a young audience, how to formulate different types of questions which will provide them with the information they require and how to plan presentations.

5.2 In the well-established and effective Coleraine Youth Council, the young people, aged 16-20 years, have a good working relationship with their peers and the youth workers. The members play an active role in designing and implementing projects which reflect well their interests, require a range of organisational and communication skills and provide a service to other young people in the community. In the last year over 30 young people have successfully completed international leadership programmes or taken part in exchanges such as a summer rock school involving 12 young people from Boston, USA and 12 young people from Coleraine. In addition to their enthusiastic participation and their enjoyment of the experiences, the young people use the lessons learned from such exchanges, to contribute positively to the programmes organised by the youth council.

5.3 In the 12 months prior to the inspection, over 58 young people successfully completed appropriate and relevant accredited courses, including the NEELB Trainee Leader Proficiency and the Open College Network courses in Youth Information and Youth Development. The AYO recognises the importance of supporting the young people and adults from the voluntary and uniformed youth organisations to avail of this training as they provide almost all of the youth work in the area. This strategic approach to training in order

to work towards a more consistently good standard of youth provision is having a beneficial effect on the young people. Past participants attribute their good levels of enjoyment and achievement to the stimulating and challenging learning environments created by the skilled youth work staff, who design and implement the courses to meet successfully the wide range of individual and organisational needs.

5.4 The young people value the relevant training opportunities within the centre-based provision and enjoy significant success at all levels. They demonstrate a maturity in their attitudes and a strong sense of ownership towards their centre in which they take responsibility for, and make decisions about, the programmes. Many of the young people transfer the skills and knowledge they gain about leadership, resilience and responsibility to their own community. They are actively involved in a variety of youth work settings and demonstrate their willingness to engage with programmes which will benefit their peers, improve their community and enhance inter-generational relationships. The young people are encouraged to celebrate any successes and to identify and plan for improvement in subsequent programmes.

6. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

6.1 The strengths of the area include:

- the positive working relationships and very good support provided by the management team in the Coleraine area to the youth centres and to the registered part-time units;
- the effective management of the youth provision within the area, in particular the strategic links developed with relevant organisations, through which the management secures additional funding to meet better the needs of the young people;
- the effective leadership and the sensitive and challenging response by youth workers to the appropriately targeted peace-building initiative;
- the relevant and good training opportunities for part-time and full-time youth workers, and for the young people, which meet well the varying needs of the communities;
- the active involvement of young people in a variety of youth work settings, which develops their active participation, an increased understanding of others and the contribution they can make to improving their communities; and
- the excellent leadership and the high quality of the youth provision in the Sunlea youth centre, which benefits both the young people and their community.

6.2 Areas for development:

The various levels of planning need to provide:

- a more coherent direction for the youth work in the Coleraine area, to include the deployment of staff; and
- more rigorous self-evaluative processes, which focus more clearly on the outcomes for the young people.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The quality of the youth provision in meeting the needs of the young people in the Coleraine area is good. The area has important strengths in most of its provision. The inspection has identified two main areas for improvement, which the management has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the progress of the areas for improvement.

APPENDIX

NUMBERS AND MEMBERSHIP OF REGISTERED UNITS FUNDED BY NEELB IN THE COLERAINE AREA

Type of Provision	Registered Units 2010/11	Total Membership 2009/10
NEELB Controlled 24 hour centres	3	771
NEELB Controlled part-time centres	2	106
Voluntary full-time centres	0	0
Voluntary part-time centres	24	1,185
Uniformed organisations	40	2,598
Other e.g. outreach/projects	4	411
TOTAL:	73	5,071

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