

# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Southern Education and Library  
Board Youth Provision in the  
Armagh, Newry and Mourne  
Area

Report of an Inspection  
in October 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 The Armagh, Newry and Mourne division is one of three geographical areas within the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) youth service. The division is covered by two district council areas: Armagh City District Council and Newry and Mourne District Council. There are two main population areas - Armagh and Newry, several small towns and villages and a significant rural dimension. Figures supplied by the organisation indicate that the area has a youth population of 51,203 aged 4-25 years; approximately 14,000 young people attend 144 registered units and organisations.

**Table 1: Numbers of registered units**

	<b>Registered Units 2010/11</b>	<b>Total Membership 2009/10</b>
Controlled full-time	0	0
Controlled part-time	1	70
Voluntary full-time	3	608
Voluntary part-time	81	7,753
Uniformed organisations	59	4,260
Other e.g. outreach/projects		1,338
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>14,029</b>

1.2 An Assistant Education Officer (ASEO) is head of the SELB youth service and has responsibility for managing and leading both the SELB and Western Education and Library Board youth services. A deputy head of youth service manages the three area-based youth officers, including the area youth officer (AYO) for Armagh, Newry and Mourne, as well as the youth officers with responsibility for participation and inclusion.

1.3 The AYO for Armagh, Newry and Mourne has been in post for four years. He is on a temporary promotional secondment from his senior youth work post in Armagh city and district. There are currently 79 part-time paid youth work staff and over 2,000 volunteers, most of whom work in the voluntary youth sector. Appendix 5 contains further details on the staffing structures.

1.4 The total membership across the registered units in the area demonstrates a year-on-year increase as indicated in table 2. Fourteen percent of the membership is at post-16; over the past two years an additional 400 young people have attended outreach programmes as part of the rural outreach initiative.

**Table 2: Total membership**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>4-9 years</b>		<b>10-15 years</b>		<b>16-18 years</b>		<b>19+ years</b>		<b>Numbers involved in outreach/detached</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2007/08	1557	2157	3266	3352	879	842	440	328	940	<b>12821</b>
2008/09	1667	2328	3459	3654	915	821	401	333	1011	<b>13089</b>
2009/10	1657	2241	3136	3300	848	762	394	353	1338	<b>14029</b>

1.5 No information was available on the number of years each of the current members within the full-time centre has been in membership. A significant minority of registered members are from different ethnic backgrounds; there are few recorded statistics on the overall numbers of young people with a disability.

## **2. FOCUS**

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

2.2 The report includes the findings from three areas under focus agreed with the ELB: participation; inclusion; and the provision in Saint John Bosco youth centre. Participation and inclusion are SELB board-wide initiatives and are significant elements of the youth service business plan. Saint John Bosco youth centre is one of three voluntary full-time youth centres in the area.

2.3 The inspection team observed the work of almost all of the full-time staff, including the direct observation of 23 youth work sessions identified to reflect the work of the three areas under focus and selected jointly by the SELB staff and the inspection team. Meetings and discussions also took place with the ASEO, the deputy head of youth service, the AYO, all of the full-time staff, 16 representatives from eight registered part-time youth organisations, and three members of the teaching staff from the two schools visited. Discussions were also held with the key staff and the managers responsible for the three areas under focus. The inspection team examined a wide range of documentation provided by the organisation, including area development plans, the annual action plans of the youth workers, evidence files and samples of moderation records.

2.4 Discussions took place with over 50 young people in five different locations in relation to their health and well-being, the arrangements for safeguarding, and on the quality of youth provision. A meeting was also held with a small number of parents about the safety and well-being of their children and on the quality of youth work provided by the SELB youth work staff.

## **3. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

3.1 The overall leadership and management of the SELB youth service in Armagh, Newry and Mourne is very good; at a strategic level, it is outstanding. The ELB's youth service business plan is appropriately divided into four strategic themes: customers and stakeholders; people; processes; and financial management. The members of the senior management team have consulted and communicated effectively with their area youth officers and youth work staff on each of the strategic themes. The agreed relevant objectives and appropriate targets are implemented and evaluated successfully at a local area level through a monitoring system that is carefully scrutinised and evaluated as part of a comprehensive, planned programme of management team meetings. All of the youth officers and youth workers interviewed have a clear understanding of the vision and the priorities included in the strategic plan. Almost all of the management team members, including the senior youth workers, have developed effective working relationships over a period of more than fifteen years; they are mutually supportive and work successfully together as a cohesive team.

3.2 The leadership and management at all levels provide a clear direction to the youth work delivery that contributes well to the overall achievements of the young people. The management team has worked strategically to attract significant additional resources. In 2009-2010, the Armagh, Newry and Mourne applied successfully for an additional £200,000 on top of the existing £1.5m budget. They have used the additional finances effectively in responding to the identified needs across the area, including the prioritised need of increased support to young people living in rural areas.

3.3 There are clearly identified targets under the customers and stakeholders section of the youth service business plan in the areas of participation and inclusion, as a result of annual stakeholder consultations and ongoing discussions with young people. For example, a key target of the participation strategy is to influence decision-makers at local government level. In Newry, members of the inspection team observed youth service staff working strategically with district council staff in the further development of a partnership agreement between young people and district council officials. Young people are fully involved in the partnership agreement through the effective youth council structure, which is included in the overall participation strategy.

3.4 Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the management of the SELB education department does not take sufficient cognisance of the outstanding quality of provision from its youth service. The formal education sector and the youth sector do not collaborate strategically in the pursuit of similar educational objectives, and in planning to deliver programmes which will address educational underachievement in a more connected and holistic way. Apart from the good links developed with the SELB inclusion unit based in Armagh, there is little evidence of collaboration with the SELB's services including the Curriculum Advice and Support Service or the alternative education provision. Further co-operation and joint working within the SELB between the formal education sector and the youth service would benefit all of the young people.

3.5 The AYO provides effective leadership and management characterised by his strong support for staff in the provision and the achievement of the agreed priorities. He uses a number of appropriate consultative processes involving full-time and part-time staff effectively to set the annual targets and priorities. During the 12 months prior to the inspection the staff considered the views of young people through the excellent youth participation structures, including over 100 young people who attended the youth-led conferences. The staff also take account of the key high level priorities included in the youth service business plan and develop area-based priorities. For example, as a result of the identified 16.6% increase in the numbers of unemployed young people under 25 years of age in the area, the wide range of youth work training courses included an Open College Network (OCN) Level 1 course in preparation for work.

3.6 The part-time youth officer and the senior youth worker for inclusion provide effective strategic planning for an appropriate and wide range of inclusive youth work delivery across the SELB area. The three inclusion priority areas identified in the current business plan have progressed significantly each year since the 2004 initiative 'Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence'. The effective strategic planning and the high level of commitment at all levels of management are leading to an inclusive service which promotes understanding between young people and their communities. The programmes are successfully integrating young people into mainstream youth provision and addressing positively issues on segregation, fear, violence, sectarianism and racism.

3.7 The part-time youth officer with responsibility for participation provides excellent strategic leadership. She has developed robust self-evaluative processes, which are used well to inform and improve youth work practice. Her co-ordination role includes the effective monitoring and evaluation of participation through regular meetings with all of the senior youth workers across the SELB. The highly effective participative structures give the young people very good opportunities to acquire and demonstrate excellent peer leadership and advocacy skills. As part of the 2010-11 participation strategy young people involved in youth councils are able to access and influence decision-makers in local government and in other statutory and voluntary agencies.

3.8 The quality of action to promote improvement is very good. The moderation process at all levels in the SELB youth service is clearly connected to the setting of the overall youth service priorities and the process of monitoring the agreed targets. Planned moderation visits to units, along with support and supervision structures, provide a very good basis for reviewing provision and effecting improvement. The area officers and senior youth workers make good use of the analysis of local and area needs to monitor and evaluate the provision. An agreed yearly planning cycle includes annual action and development plans for all of the staff. The youth officers and staff recognise appropriately the need to develop further their critical reflective practice processes. The youth workers are beginning to include more formalised recording of the achievements of the young people in their evaluations. They are working appropriately towards recording the progression of the many young people who attend and complete accredited and non-accredited training programmes.

3.9 The SELB collects and retains data from a number of relevant sources and uses the information appropriately to inform planning on an annual basis. There are active links and very good collaboration with community-based and other statutory providers, including the two district councils. There is a highly effective and strategically planned partnership with a health worker from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

3.10 In discussions with two Principals of post-primary schools, and in the observations of school-based sessions, it is clear that teaching staff and the young people value the input from youth workers. In one area, the good development of relationships between a cluster of eight schools and eight youth providers has provided nearly 1,400 young people with activity-based programmes during the summer and Easter holidays as part of the extended schools programme. This initiative is strategically planned with the youth service at a local area level; it is not currently part of the formal education area learning community strategy.

3.11 The quality of the youth work staff across the area is very good. They are well-qualified, have a range of experience and are deployed appropriately to identified areas of need, in both rural and urban locations. A comprehensive programme of professional development opportunities for full-time and part-time staff is included in an annual training calendar. Each of the full-time youth workers has taken part in at least two additional professional development courses on a range of areas directly related to the strategic themes of inclusion and participation. A minority of the staff have successfully completed specific professional development in mental health and autism awareness to support and develop further inclusive youth work.

3.12 The SELB has made very good use of additional funding including Peace III initiatives to successfully meet the strategic target of delivering personal and social development programmes to rural young people. The effective deployment of rural outreach workers is meeting the needs of these young people well through the provision of good quality services in sometimes very remote locations.

#### **4. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

4.1 The overall quality of achievements and standards is outstanding. In the 12 months prior to the inspection, over 350 young people successfully completed a wide range of appropriate and relevant accredited courses including: OCN courses in Leadership in Youth Work; Level 1 Job Skills; and Level 1 Good Relations. In addition, 133 part-time youth workers enrolled in seven courses included in the annual training calendar. In four of the courses, the pass rate was 100% and included 16 part-time staff that successfully completed

the OCN Level 2 in Youth Trainee Leadership. The courses are taken up by young adults with a wide range of academic needs and abilities; the high levels of attendance and achievement are due in part to the stimulating and challenging learning environments created by the skilled youth work staff who tailor the courses to meet the individual and organisational needs of the participants.

4.2 Almost all of the young people engage enthusiastically with the wide-range of accredited and non-accredited programmes. In most of the sessions observed, the young people stated that the programmes and their own personal achievements surpassed their expectations. In almost all of the sessions, the young people worked together effectively, demonstrating the skills of negotiation and problem-solving, facilitated skilfully by their youth workers.

4.3 In the discussions held, there were links made by a significant minority of the young people with school-based learning, and in particular, the taught elements of the learning for life and work programme.

4.4 The young people use the skills learnt in a number of appropriate ways. In their local communities, youth forums, and in meetings with public representatives, the young people debate confidently and articulate clearly their opinions and those of their peers. In one area, a group of young people has made concerted efforts to gain the approval of the local community, which ultimately involved the organisation of a petition, planning and organising meetings with local community representatives, writing letters and making oral presentations. The young people, with the support of the youth workers, turned a potentially negative, challenging situation into a vehicle for learning and development. They demonstrated problem-solving, reasoning and good organisational and communication skills. They grew in confidence and realised that their opinions, when well expressed, counted in making a difference to their own lives and to their community.

4.5 In most of the sessions observed, the young people articulated well, using mature and confident language, the personal and development skills which they are acquiring. During a sexual health session, the young people spoke of how they had developed a greater understanding of the sensitive subject. A significant number of other young people informed members of the inspection team about the growth in their self-esteem and about the team-work experiences which have enabled them to progress to other educational programmes, including the Duke of Edinburgh's award. The young people accept enthusiastically the responsibility for organising their own programmes and set targets, which are challenging and purposeful.

4.6 The members of almost all of the groups observed were familiar with group work processes. During the inspection, they were observed leading aspects of programmes with confidence and conviction. The young people's commitment to the process of participation and inclusion is outstanding, as evidenced by the successful youth forums and youth councils. In the sessions observed, the young people responded well to the opportunities to take on peer leadership roles, demonstrating good levels of critical thinking and mature discussions around sensitive subject areas. The frequent opportunities to participate and to be included provide young people with ongoing leadership development and progression. In the meetings of the three youth councils, the more longstanding members were observed facilitating sessions for younger members, providing positive role models and displaying a mature understanding of the role and purpose of youth councils as defined by the SELB participation model.



4.7 Across the area, members of the inspection team observed groups of young people from a diverse range of learning and social needs working together in well-structured programmes. In one session the young people acted as peer buddies to other young people with disabilities, and demonstrated a good understanding of their needs. Overall, the young people demonstrated very good advocacy skills and worked well together, collaborating on a range of projects reflecting their interests and abilities.

## **5. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5.1 The overall quality of the youth provision is outstanding. The staff and volunteers plan thoroughly for the programmes, which reflect well the central theme and core principles of the youth work curriculum, and the SELB Youth Service business plan. The youth workers provide specific programmes, which target and are matched well to the needs and aspirations of the young people. The agreed needs-based priorities are included in each youth worker's annual action plans. The well-developed structures to enhance the participation of young people and to promote inclusion, mental health and well-being are reflected appropriately in the wide range of programmes.

5.2 Almost all of the sessions observed were evaluated as good or better, with the majority ranging from very good to outstanding. In the best practice the sessions were very well prepared with clear learning outcomes, which were shared with, and understood by, the young people. The staff used the resources creatively and set a good pace for learning, providing a good balance of activities. The young people responded positively and were encouraged by the staff to become actively involved in all aspects of the programmes. The staff used well the comments from the young people at the end of each session to record progress, to illustrate the learning which had taken place, and to plan for subsequent programmes.

5.3 The high quality creative and challenging programmes have a strong emphasis on inclusion and diversity. Equality of opportunity is evident from the good balance of young people who come from different socio-economic and religious backgrounds, including young Travellers and young people with a disability. The participative structures in the SELB youth service are excellent; they are well-developed and offer a range of opportunities for the young people to gain the knowledge and skills and understanding to meet their own needs, as well as those of other young people. The excellent facilitation and group work skills demonstrated by the youth workers help the young people to evaluate and describe the extent of their learning, how well they are working towards achieving their potential and the value of their contributions within the organisation and in their community.

5.4 The written evaluations did not fully reflect the achievements and outcomes of the young people in the observed work. In discussions with the youth work staff and officers, they acknowledge the need for further continued development in written self-evaluative and critical reflective practices.

5.5 The youth workers have established and maintained a wide range of appropriate links with relevant partners and stakeholders including the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Community Safety Partnerships and minority ethnic groups. These well-developed links provide a minority of young people with skills which they use in regional and national contexts, including the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and the United Kingdom Youth Parliament.

5.6 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the area is outstanding. The evaluation of pastoral care included discussions held with over 50 young people. The young people reported that they feel safe in the sessions provided by the youth work staff and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns. They talked enthusiastically about the support provided by the youth workers. The young people are cared for and supported in a mutually respectful atmosphere that is purposeful, relaxed and good-humoured.

5.7 The SELB has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory youth sector. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The SELB needs to address the completion of the work begun to ensure that all of the parents of those young people engaged in outreach work and other programmes are informed of the policies and procedures relating to child protection.

## SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

5.8 The strengths of the area include:

- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care which ensures that the young people are cared for and supported in a mutually respectful atmosphere that is purposeful, relaxed and good-humoured;
- the high levels of individual accreditation and the very good range of skills which the young people are developing to enhance their capacity to make a positive social and political contribution, both individually and as members of their community;
- the outstanding strategic leadership of the Assistant Senior Education Officer and deputy head of youth service, who communicate and promote effectively the agreed priorities for the delivery of very good quality services to the young people;
- the well-managed and appropriate links with a range of external agencies that add value to the strategic and operational plans of the youth service and which contribute directly to improved outcomes for the young people and their local communities;
- the outstanding strategic planning for, and the local area delivery of, participative structures which are inclusive across the area; and
- the effective leadership and management of the area youth officer, characterised by his highly supportive role for staff in the achievement of the agreed priorities of the area.

## 6. CONCLUSION

6.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of youth provision in this area is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The SELB Youth Service has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- In two of the voluntary youth centres inspected there were some concerns relating to health and safety and child protection procedures that have been brought to the attention of the youth workers-in-charge. The Inspectorate will carry out a further visit within six weeks to the voluntary provision to ensure full compliance.

### PARTICIPATION

In the area inspected, the quality of the provision for youth participation is outstanding.

Among the strengths of the programme to promote increased participation are:

- the excellent strategic leadership and vision of the youth officer with responsibility for participation;
- the robust self-evaluative processes which the youth officer with responsibility for participation uses well to inform and to improve youth work practice;
- the highly effective participative structures, which give the young people very good opportunities to acquire, demonstrate and use excellent peer leadership and advocacy skills;
- the wide range of enjoyable and relevant programmes, which are matched well to the interests, expectations and developmental needs of the young people;
- the mutually beneficial partnerships, which the youth service has established to ensure that the voice of young people is valued and listened to by other organisations; and
- the high quality youth work training programmes, which promote a culture of participation and support effectively the learning needs of the young people and the youth work staff.

### INCLUSION

In the area inspected, the quality of the provision within the Inclusion programme is outstanding.

There are three priority areas within the Inclusion programme: Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED); Investing in Our Future – Creative Youth Programme; and Youth Education Social Inclusion Partnership (YESIP) – Young People Building Positive Relationships Programme (funded through Peace III).

Among the strengths of the Inclusion programme are:

- the effective strategic planning and the high level of commitment at all levels of management to providing an inclusive service, which promotes understanding between young people and their communities, and which is central to the programming of the highly committed youth workers;
- the effective and informed leadership of the youth officer with overall responsibility for inclusion and community relations;
- the effective working partnerships with other providers of services to young people within the ELB area, and the realistic planning within the resources available, including the consideration of sustainable programmes which will develop further the participation of the young people involved and which will meet their identified needs;
- the wide range of marginalised groups with which the youth service works, the flexibility of the programmes which engage the young people well and respond to their needs and interests, and the high retention rates and good outcomes for the young people;
- the close working links across the youth service and with other divisions within the ELB and the effective use of expertise to train and support the workers and, on occasions, to support the young people within the programmes; and
- the very good monitoring and evaluation of the programmes to inform future planning, to support the workers in extending their understanding of the needs of different groups and to provide the best outcomes for the young people.

### ST JOHN BOSCO YOUTH CENTRE, NEWRY

The overall quality of provision and leadership of Saint John Bosco youth centre is good.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the good leadership of the full-time youth worker, who has the confidence and support of the young people, the staff and the wider community;
- the inclusive ethos developed by the staff, their good understanding of the needs of the young people and the effective planning to meet their needs;
- the high motivation of the young people and their active involvement in a good range of learning experiences, which develop their self-esteem;
- the good use of the Organisational Change programme provided by SELB and the Big Deal programme, to develop further a shared understanding of participation among the young people and the staff;
- the very good working relationships between the young people and the staff and the good support for the young people's personal and social development; and
- the good standards achieved by the young people in a range of programme areas, including, sport, drama, arts, health and well-being.

The areas for improvement are:

- the need to develop a more strategic and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the progression and improvement in the outcomes for the young people; and
- the need to review and update the child protection procedures.

### Conclusion

The quality of the youth provision in St John Bosco youth centre is good. The centre has important strengths in most of its provision. The inspection has identified an area 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.

## APPENDIX 5

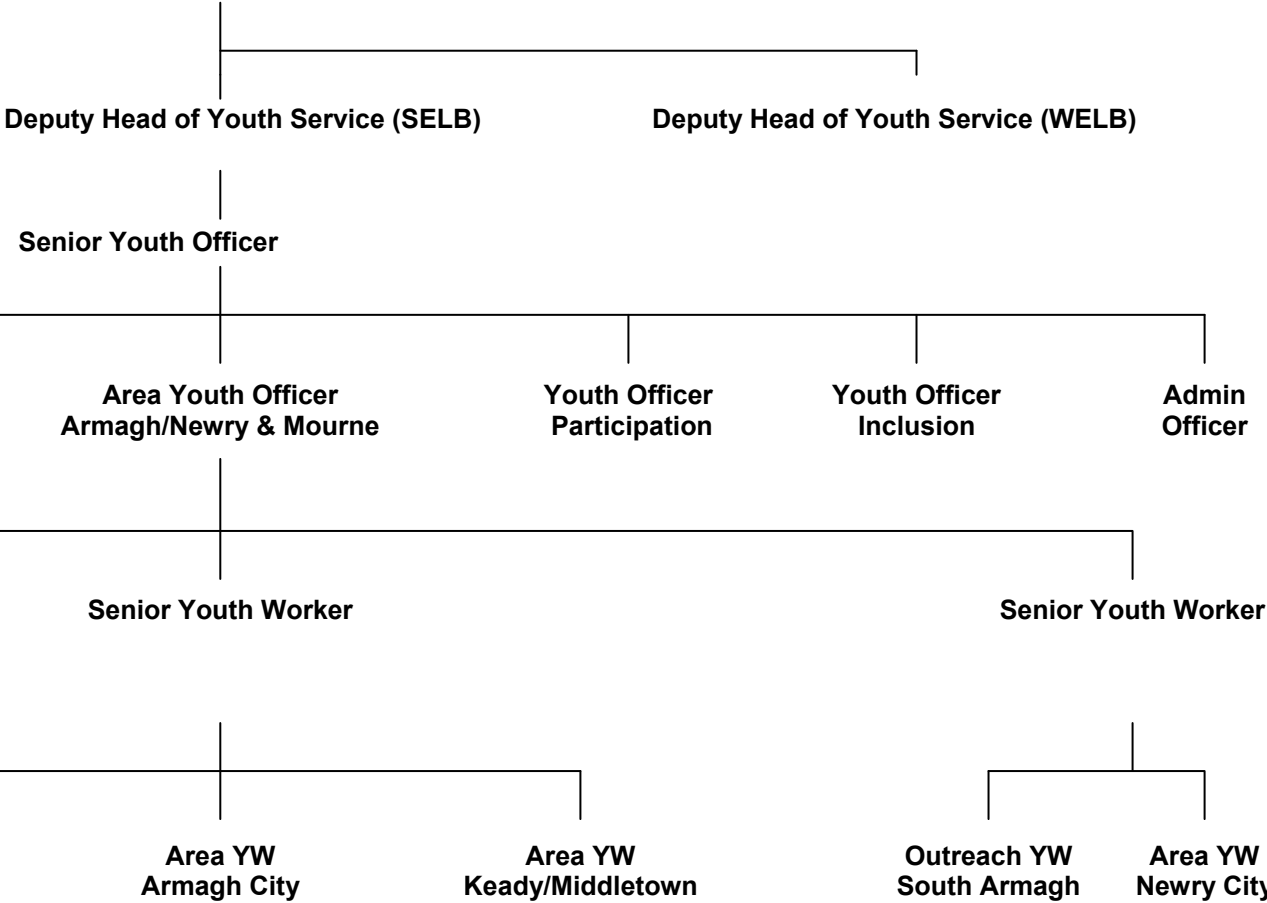
**Leadership training (please detail all training courses provided for young people and youth workers in the area from September 2009)**

<b>Title of course including accreditation details</b>	<b>Number of young people enrolled</b>	<b>Number of adults enrolled</b>	<b>Percentage successfully completing the course and level of award</b>
NIOCN Training for Youth Work		16	100
Trainee Leaders		8	87
Disability Awareness		20	100
Rescue and Emergency Care		23	69
Child Protection Training		60	96
Fundamentals of Autism		4	100
International Work with Young People		2	100
Duke of Edinburgh Award	154		Gold 36, Silver 46, Bronze 72
British Red Cross	10		100
Emergency Life Support	5		100
Mobile Health Project	4		100
Delta Babysitting	37		100
GLAD	12		67
NCFE Drug Awareness Level 1	10		100
OCN Leadership in Youth Work, (Senior Member Training ) (South Down, South Armagh and Newry)	69		78

<b>Title of course including accreditation details</b>	<b>Number of young people enrolled</b>	<b>Number of adults enrolled</b>	<b>Percentage successfully completing the course and level of award</b>
Young Volunteers	27		96
HIYA Sexual Health Training (Adult)	15		86
Inclusive Games	11		100
Minor Games	30		40
OCN Level 1 CV/ Job Skills	8		100
OCN Level 1 Good Relations	9		100



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