

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Youth Provision in Fermanagh,
Omagh and Mid-Ulster

Report of an area inspection in
January 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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1. Context

Fermanagh, Omagh and Mid-Ulster (FOMU) is one of nine new geographical youth service areas across Northern Ireland established at the beginning of September 2018. The youth service within the Education Authority (EA) is led by an assistant director of children and young people services, a strategic services manager and two heads of service who provide strategic direction for the delivery and support for the youth service. A senior youth officer (SYO) has been appointed for each of the nine areas who have responsibility for the management of the youth provision in their area. In FOMU the SYO has been in post for over a year.

Currently there is a team leader, five senior youth workers, ten full-time youth workers, including three 'Pathways'¹ workers, and four vacant posts. There are two full-time and four part-time statutory centres in Omagh, Magherafelt, Enniskillen and Carrickmore that employ approximately 45 part-time paid youth support workers and volunteers.

There has been an increase in the overall registered membership, particularly in the past two years, and at the time of the inspection there were over 1800 registered members an increase of approximately 700 from 2016/17. The ETI observed a mixture of centre-based, generic and targeted provision with an average of 16 young people in attendance per session during the inspection.

2. Views of staff and young people

A focus group with the area youth workers indicated their satisfaction with the new structure, the quality of the continuing professional development opportunities and the support and supervision they receive on a regular basis. The young people that spoke to members of the inspection team talked positively about the youth work staff and the good opportunities provided for them to be involved in the planning and management of their own programmes.

3. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the outcomes for the young people;
- the quality of the provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Good

¹ Pathways is a professionally accredited youth work training scheme delivered in partnership with the University of Ulster which offers candidates the opportunity to study for an Honors Degree or Postgraduate Qualification in youth work, whilst employed as a trainee youth support worker for EA.

5. Outcomes for learners

Almost all of the young people demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours, they engage enthusiastically in the age appropriate, generic and targeted opportunities provided by the youth workers. They develop well their personal and social capabilities and skills and improve their health and wellbeing through the many positive interactions with others and gain increased confidence to work independently. Almost all of the young people listen respectfully and moderate their views in response to the contributions of their peers and most of them are articulate, converse and interact easily with adults.

The young people access accredited and non-accredited programmes that contribute well to meeting the Department of Education youth work policy outcomes and in particular the two overarching goals of raising standards and closing the performance attainment gap increasing access and equality. According to the figures provided by the EA, 386 young people have attended accredited and recognised programmes in the Fermanagh and Omagh area and a further 233 in the Mid-Ulster area. Overall, 619 young people have participated in the programmes, of which 151 young people have completed, or are participating in the Learning Together Programme²; in most of the programmes the retention and achievement rate for full-time and part-time courses is outstanding at 95%. A further 258 pupils at Key Stage 3 were involved last year in intervention programmes that are helping to address stress and anxiety, peer pressure, and low self-esteem. The young people completed successfully a range of 193 additional programmes including: Duke of Edinburgh awards; peer mentoring; youth leadership and good relations training that support effectively the development of the young people's resilience; thinking and reflective skills. The young people spoke of their increased awareness of maintaining positive mental health, developing key strategies and knowing where to access further help and support.

The new structure for engaging with young people is developing well across the area and is enabling the youth voice at local and regional levels to be heard. The young people are encouraged to participate in the Local Area Group³ (LAG) and two consultation events with young people in 2019 involved over 200 young people providing feedback that shaped the youth service delivery in their area. The young people are involved in social action projects, including the 3Cs⁴ programme, and there are very good links with the district councils which is building important connections with the local community. There are very good opportunities for young people to develop leadership roles through clearly defined progression pathways from the range of accredited courses on offer and the innovative trainee youth worker programmes.

The inclusion of young people with disabilities is a key strength in this area. The young people respond positively to the sensitive approach by the youth workers, the appropriate interventions and excellent group work skills allow the young people the time and space to build confidence, to learn and develop new skills. The care and welfare of the young people is intrinsic to the holistic view of youth work and is visible in almost every aspect of the youth work observed during this inspection. A satisfaction survey carried out in 2019 indicated that almost all of the 3000 young people who responded were very satisfied or satisfied with the youth service provision in the area.

² The *Learning Together* Programme is a collaborative working partnership between individual schools and the EA Youth Service at key stages 2-4.

³ The purpose of Local Advisory Groups are to provide advice to support the development and implementation of local youth service provision.

⁴ The 3 C's programmes is aimed at young people aged 14 and involves an international trip.

6. Quality of provision

The curriculum is broad and balanced providing a very good range of programmes that reflect well the model for effective practice and target the identified needs of the young people in the FOMU area. The combination of extensive programmes on offer is derived from skilful engagement with young people to find out from them what skills they feel they need to develop and what issues they would like to address. The planning is well-considered and manages well the balance between regional needs assessment and the concerns of young people within their communities. The youth workers' genuine interest in the 'lived' experience of the young people, expressed in their own words, is the important starting point in the programmes co-design process. The co-design process is a key component to the effective youth work observed, almost all of the activities are differentiated according to the young people's needs, interests and aspirations.

There are almost 160 programmes in progress across the area with 200 programmes completed on a variety of important topics including, school-based work, peer leadership, international work, inclusion and programmes aimed at reducing young people feeling isolated. During the inspection the programmes and opportunities for the young people to actively engage and lead their learning is focused appropriately on mental health and wellbeing, and exploring aspects of cultural diversity.

As a result of the important focus on collaborative planning to meet the assessed needs of the young people, the levels of engagement observed during the inspection were consistently high. Almost all of the sessions observed during the inspection were good or better. In the most effective practice the sessions took place in a climate of respect and trust. The working relationships and engagement skills between the staff and the young people and among the young people are very good. The young people have well-planned opportunities to: ask questions to clarify what they have to do to complete tasks; organise and plan together what they have to do; set targets and measure progress; and evaluate sources of information to agree which is most useful. The youth workers' skilful use of group work supports well the opportunities for collaborative learning building upon the good self-management skills observed during the sessions. Through effective questioning, the youth workers challenged the young people's thinking, deepened their understanding of the issues under discussion and promoted the development of their communication skills. The young people have many opportunities to apply their skills in real and relevant contexts, for example, discussions and debates on contemporary issues such as Brexit and abortion. In the small number of sessions that could be improved, there was a lack of challenge, the sessions were overly adult led and the pace was too slow.

The youth workers promote effectively a culture of equality in which the young people are encouraged to understand and accept diversity and promote an inclusive environment where they can meet and develop together. There are effective programmes that address inclusion such as T:BUC⁵ and CRED⁶ that encourage young people from different community groups such as travellers and newcomers, particularly in the Coalisland area. The youth workers are acutely aware of the needs of the most rural young people following in-depth consultations with the LAG. Going forward, it will be important for the staff continue to respond to the needs of rural young people making sure that there is accessible provision at the weekends and twilight programmes, particularly in the Fermanagh area, to respond positively to the key issue of a lack of public transport links.

⁵ Together Building United communities is a government strategy to promote desirability of good relations and reconciliation

⁶ Community Relations Equality and Diversity in Education (Department of Education policy 2011)

Based on evidence available at the time of the inspection, the FOMU approach to the care and welfare of the young people impacts positively on learning and outcomes for learners. The youth workers create a safe, welcoming and supportive space where the young people can express themselves, learn in a relaxed and friendly environment and where they develop their personal, social, emotional and employability skills. As a result of their active participation in the carefully constructed array of programmes, most of the young people are positive contributors to their communities.

7. Leadership and management

There is a clear strategic direction and focus for the current and future work of the youth service across the EA including an EA strategic ten year plan that is connected well to the draft children and young people's strategy. The regional and local delivery methods provide appropriate support for the DE vision of 'every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development' (DE Vision statement 2013). The EA have developed appropriately the planning process to include a three year local development plan and a three year regional youth development plan. A detailed local assessment of need includes well-considered areas of enquiry including: health and well-being; learning and achieving; participation; inclusion diversity and equality of opportunity; good relations and living in safety and stability. All of this important information forms the basis of a local response to need for example, the young people under health and well-being stated that sport and fitness programme is as important as health programmes, outdoor learning activities were also seen as important and 79% of young people recognised that accreditation should be a key focus for delivery. The youth work staff in FOMU are setting appropriate key targets and goals through one year action plans which will respond to these and other assessed needs.

The youth work team are managed by the senior youth officer who has guided the change process effectively in a relatively short period of time. However, it will be important to fill the vacant posts, particularly at team leader level, so that the management structure is fully functional. The new draft youth development plan in FOMU for 2020-2023 is appropriate, sets out key targets that importantly take account of the expressed needs and interests of the young people, while also taking account of the youth service policy and a range of additional policies that impact on young people's lives in the area.

The staff work well as a team and are developing an agreed language and collective understanding of the importance of rigorous self-evaluation in improving further the provision and outcomes for the young people. The recent development of the 'Pathways' project and the trainee leader support scheme have begun to fill long term vacant posts in the Lisnaskea and Fermanagh areas. Going forward it is important that the EA implement the changes identified in the assessment of need with young people from the Lisnaskea, Enniskillen and Fermanagh areas.

There has been an improvement in the learning environment through the development of Lisnaskea youth centre and sensory rooms in Carrickmore and Omagh youth centres. The FOMU is a wide and expansive geographical area where the youth workers are deployed well.

The continued development of the target monitor is working well for the youth workers who have an understanding of how it is used to assist in the moderation and outcomes for young people. The evidence files contain good information on baseline evaluations, attendance, session plans and recorded outcomes for young people. However, it will be important that there is a more consistent approach going forward to recording evidence in the files to help further with self-reflection leading to improvement.

The well-developed purposeful partnerships with appropriate stakeholders is supporting well the work of the young people throughout the area. The effective partnerships with ten post-primary schools is working well, particularly with young people who have barriers to learning. The principals and link teachers spoke highly of the positive relationships with the youth service and how the pupils respond effectively to youth work methodology. Going forward it will be important that both the school and the youth service continue to monitor and quality assure the learning together programme to inform future improvements. The FOMU area continues to develop strategic partnerships with a range of organisations that add value and relate well to the youth service priorities, including the Police Community Safety Partnership, both of the district councils and the Traveller community.

The administration arrangements for the area is very efficient and supports very effectively the senior youth officer and the youth work team.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people broadly reflect the guidance from the Department of Education. However, the organisation needs to ensure that its safeguarding policies and procedures reflect more fully the legislation and practice relating to adults who may be at risk of harm or in need of protection. The young people report that they feel safe in the organisation and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

9. Overall effectiveness

Fermanagh, Omagh and Mid-Ulster has the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

The areas for improvement are to:

- implement the changes identified in the assessment of need for Enniskillen and the Fermanagh rural area; and
- ensure vacant posts are filled, particularly at team leader level, so that the management structure is fully functional.

Statistical data

Age group	4-8		9-13		14-18		19-21		22-25		Outreach/ Detached		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
2016/17	108	86	303	174	201	195	29	14	*	*			1110
2017/18	125	99	342	359	230	243	19	*	*	6			1423
2018/19	151	98	458	347	317	369	26	55	12	6	21	24	1884
Current	87	62	514	457	367	310	18	10	10	11	12	13	1871

Source: Data as held by the organisation.
* fewer than 5

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website at [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Youth](#)

Inspectors observed 20 youth work sessions and also held focus group discussions with over 35 young people. The inspectors held discussions with representatives of partner organisations, youth workers and other stakeholders. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised the youth workers' planning and the organisation's self-evaluation reports. The inspectors evaluated the organisation's arrangements for safeguarding young people.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

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%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the organisation:

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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