

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Youth Provision in Newry,
Mourne and Down

Report of an area inspection in
May 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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and other commissioning Departments

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CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	3
7. Leadership and management	4
8. Safeguarding	5
9. Overall effectiveness	5

Appendices

- A. Health and safety/accommodation
- B. Statistical data
- C. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- D. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Newry, Mourne and Down (NMD) is one of nine new geographical youth service areas across Northern Ireland established at the beginning of September 2018. The Education Authority (EA) has developed two strands for youth service delivery, a local and regional service model led by two heads of service to provide strategic direction for the delivery and support for the youth service. A senior youth officer has been appointed for each of the nine areas who have responsibility for the strategic management of the provision in their area.

The senior youth officer in the NMD area has been in post for six months, there is a vacant team leader position for the Down area. The current EA staffing complement is: a team leader; a senior youth worker; a senior youth worker from the regional FLARE¹ team; eight area youth workers, a part-time volunteer co-ordinator and a leader-in-charge of the seaboard sailing association. There are two part-time EA youth centres in Killyleagh and Ballynahinch that employ part-time youth support workers in charge. There are approximately 100 part-time voluntary and uniformed organisations registered with the EA across the area which include five full-time voluntary youth centres in Downpatrick, Newcastle, Newry and Crossmaglen. There has been a steady decrease in overall registered membership in the past three years from 1,921 in 2015-16 to 909 currently. The ETI observed an average of 16 young people per session during the inspection.

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of meetings were held with parents who spoke of their high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the provision for their children. They highlighted the safe environment created by the youth workers and how their children enjoyed the various programmes and activities, where they are offered opportunities to develop key life skills.

A focus group with the area youth workers indicated that the staff were satisfied overall with their working conditions. Although, a small number would like more professional development opportunities to be made available including being given more time to settle into new roles and responsibilities of the new systems for monitoring and evaluating their work.

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 Facilitating Life and Resilience Education (FLARE) is a support service for young people aged 11 – 25 years old who have poor mental health, provided by the EA youth service, in partnership with Public Health Agency.

5. Outcomes for learners

Almost all of the young people demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviour. They are articulate, converse and interact easily with adults. A particular strength of the provision is the positive impact it has made in the development of the young people's team working skills, in improving their social and interpersonal skills and in raising their confidence and self-esteem. The young people express pride in and celebrate their achievements including, for example, their success in the youth and future talent awards. This is an annual event that celebrates the work and achievements of 'unsung heroes' across the NMD area who do not normally receive recognition for their contribution to their families, youth group and the wider community.

The young people also achieve well in a good range of accredited and non-accredited programmes. According to the data provided by NMD the achievement rate in accredited programmes is very high at over 95%. In the learning together programme², in the last two years, approximately 429 young people have achieved a level 1 or 2 accredited qualification, with almost all of those entered achieving a level 2 qualification in personal success and wellbeing equivalent to a GCSE grade B. The range of accredited programmes also includes: level one and two leadership; volunteering in the youth service; and diversity and good relations qualifications. A further 199 successfully completed a range of non-accredited training programmes, including summer scheme volunteering and peer leadership training. The young people are also encouraged to volunteer and their efforts are recognised through the achievement of a range of volunteering awards. For example, in the last two years, 142 young people achieved the millennium volunteer award and 86 young people achieved the Duke of Edinburgh award.

There is very good evidence that the participation of the young people in the youth programmes impacts positively on the development of their personal and social skills and enables them to engage more successfully in their education at school or college. For example, the young people report that they are able to engage more readily and effectively in classroom discussions and to present their work to their classmates and teachers.

There are very good opportunities for young people to develop leadership roles through clearly defined progression pathways from the 'Change Ahead' programme for young people transitioning from primary school, participation in the youth forums, in the youth council through to volunteering and part-time youth worker roles. As a result of participating in the youth leadership development roles, the young people are able to successfully engage in and lead effectively the youth forum and council meetings and to represent young people on the local advisory group³. The young people also have very good opportunities to progress into paid leadership positions within the youth service through the trainee youth support worker scheme; of the 29 part-time and full-time youth workers in the NMD team, 20 of them progressed to their roles through their participation in these programmes. In addition, four of the part-time staff are currently undertaking or have completed the degree in youth and community work.

The participation of young people in the planning and management of their own programmes is a key strength of the NMD area. The young people spoke confidently to members of the inspection team about the opportunities that participation has in providing a platform for them to have their voices heard on a range of issues such as the consultation on the draft NMD council's corporate plan. The young people also have good opportunities to develop their leadership skills through planning and organising events such as the gala ball for young people with disabilities, and through volunteering and acting as peer mentors for younger members.

² The *Learning Together* Programme is a collaborative working partnership between individual schools and the 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.

6. Quality of provision

The curriculum is broad and balanced providing a good range of programmes that reflect well the model for effective practice⁴ and target the identified needs of the young people in NMD. The programmes are well-informed by the feedback from a good range of consultation methods used with young people and youth workers. The main issues identified through the research and consultation are contributing well to raising standards and closing the education gap between those young people who are underachieving in and out of school. The programmes appropriately focus on issues such as personal and social development, developing positive mental health, resilience, social inclusion, disability and gender-based programmes which are meeting well their needs.

The youth workers promote effectively a culture of equality in which the young people are encouraged to understand and accept diversity and promote an all-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, minority ethnic communities to engage actively in the programmes. The 'One Team one goal' programme based in Newtownhamilton, demonstrates how young people from the Bulgarian Roma community, south Armagh and Newtownhamilton, work well together on a project about racism and bullying. The young people have made friends with others from different community and cultural backgrounds, have a greater understanding of other people's cultures and beliefs, and the programmes effectively support their integration into the community. The 'Inclusion in the City' programme enables young people with a range of disabilities to express their emotions and helps them to recognise and develop coping strategies to engage positively with the outside world. In particular, the programmes have boosted their confidence and, as a result, they have participated in social activities and other experiences which they would not have been able to cope with before. Going forward the organisation is appropriately extending and developing the range of programmes for the under 13 year old age group.

The relationships between the staff and the young people are very good, most of the young people demonstrate high levels of mutual respect with each other, the staff and other adults. Through well-planned activities the staff support the young people to build relationships, enhance their motivation and strengthen their resilience thus enabling them to develop healthy relationships in their groups.

The quality of the youth work observed ranged from outstanding to having important areas for improvement with the majority of the sessions observed being very good or better. In the most effective practice, almost all of the young people engaged effectively in the sessions and displayed enjoyment in well-planned activities. The youth workers create a purposeful, well-organised learning environment and use a good range of purposeful activities that develop effectively the young people's thinking skills and supports well the development of their communication and presentation skills. Open ended questions and probing are used effectively to extend their responses. The youth workers encouraged the young people, who used a wide range of descriptive words, to express their emotions. In a small minority of sessions observed, the youth workers need to develop further the communication skills of the young people to enable them to talk confidently about their learning.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the NMD approach to the care and welfare of the young people impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners. The youth workers create a safe, welcoming and supportive space where the young people can be themselves, have fun in a relaxed and friendly environment and where they can develop their personal, social, emotional and employability skills. As a result of their participation in the programmes, most of the young people are active contributors to the life and work of their area.

⁴ The Model for Effective Practice is a curriculum and programme development tool for youth workers.

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)

7. Leadership and management

Following the restructuring of the EA youth service in Northern Ireland there is good evidence of how the local and regional structures are beginning to work together to benefit of the young people in the NMD area. For example, through: the positive work of the FLARE team who work effectively with local delivery youth workers; the peripatetic outdoor learning staff that support effectively the programme delivery; the good support given by the ICT team to the media projects; and through the small grants programme in supporting local delivery.

The recently appointed senior youth officer is part of a small management team that lead the staff team effectively in the delivery of the youth work across the area. The area plan for 2018-20 is a comprehensive strategic document that reflects well local and regional needs. The key targets included in the plan are appropriate, understood and agreed by all of the youth work team. Despite the wide geographical area, the youth workers are deployed well, the youth workers understand their roles and responsibilities and there is a clear vision for the delivery of youth services based appropriately on the ongoing assessment of needs of the young people. The management are aware of the need to develop further the youth work provision in the Down area and to continue to build a cohesive team to share good practice across the area and beyond.

The controlled delivery agreements for each staff outline appropriately their individual areas of responsibility and identifies the needs of the young people in that area and the methodologies each worker will use to meet them. The target monitor has recently been updated and both youth workers and management are beginning to use it appropriately to inform the monitoring and evaluation of each of the area youth workers action plans and to make more effective links to the area plan. The evidence files for the youth workers are used well to inform planning and delivery although there is a need to ensure a greater consistency in the approach to gathering the necessary information in the files to inform better self-evaluation.

While the new management structure and procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of youth work needs time to fully embed, the recent development of a new moderation framework and assessment criteria should assist the youth workers further in the critical reflection and self-evaluation of the youth work delivery. Going forward, it will be important that all of the youth workers use the current processes for monitoring and self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvement. In particular, using the outcomes of the evaluation process to inform future actions which achieve the intended improvements in the learning, provision and management.

There are well-developed purposeful partnerships with appropriate stakeholders to support the work of the young people throughout the area. The organisation has developed strategic partnerships with a range of organisations that add value and relate well to the youth service priorities, including the Police Community Safety Partnership, NMD district council and the Traveller, Gypsy and Roma community partnership. The effective partnerships between the formal and non-formal education sectors is a key strength of NMD; the school principals report how the effective partnerships with the youth service, in particular through the learning together programme, is developing the young peoples' personal and social skills; improving their attendance; enabling them to gain accredited qualifications; and contributing to removing their barriers to learning.

The accommodation and resources in Newry youth resource centre are of a high quality, they are kept well and support effectively the youth work provision and activities. The administration team support effectively the youth work team: going forward, is it important that the administration team meet more formally to record issues so that they can be taken forward at a management level.

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

Newry, Mourne and Down 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 area for improvement is:

- to continue to develop and embed the systems for quality assurance and in particular, to ensure that the process of monitoring and evaluation informs future actions as a result of robust self-evaluation.

Health and safety accommodation

1. There is a need to examine any potential health and safety hazards caused by the external sewer and drainage system.

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	
2015/16	16	23	255	347	611	573	12	14			23	47	1921
2016/17			173	278	473	525	22	89	*	5	26	49	1644
2017/18			126	102	426	463	31	21	6		13	17	1205
Current			76	109	345	374	*		*	*			909

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 17 youth work sessions and also held focus group discussions with over 45 young people. The inspectors held discussions with a number of parents, 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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