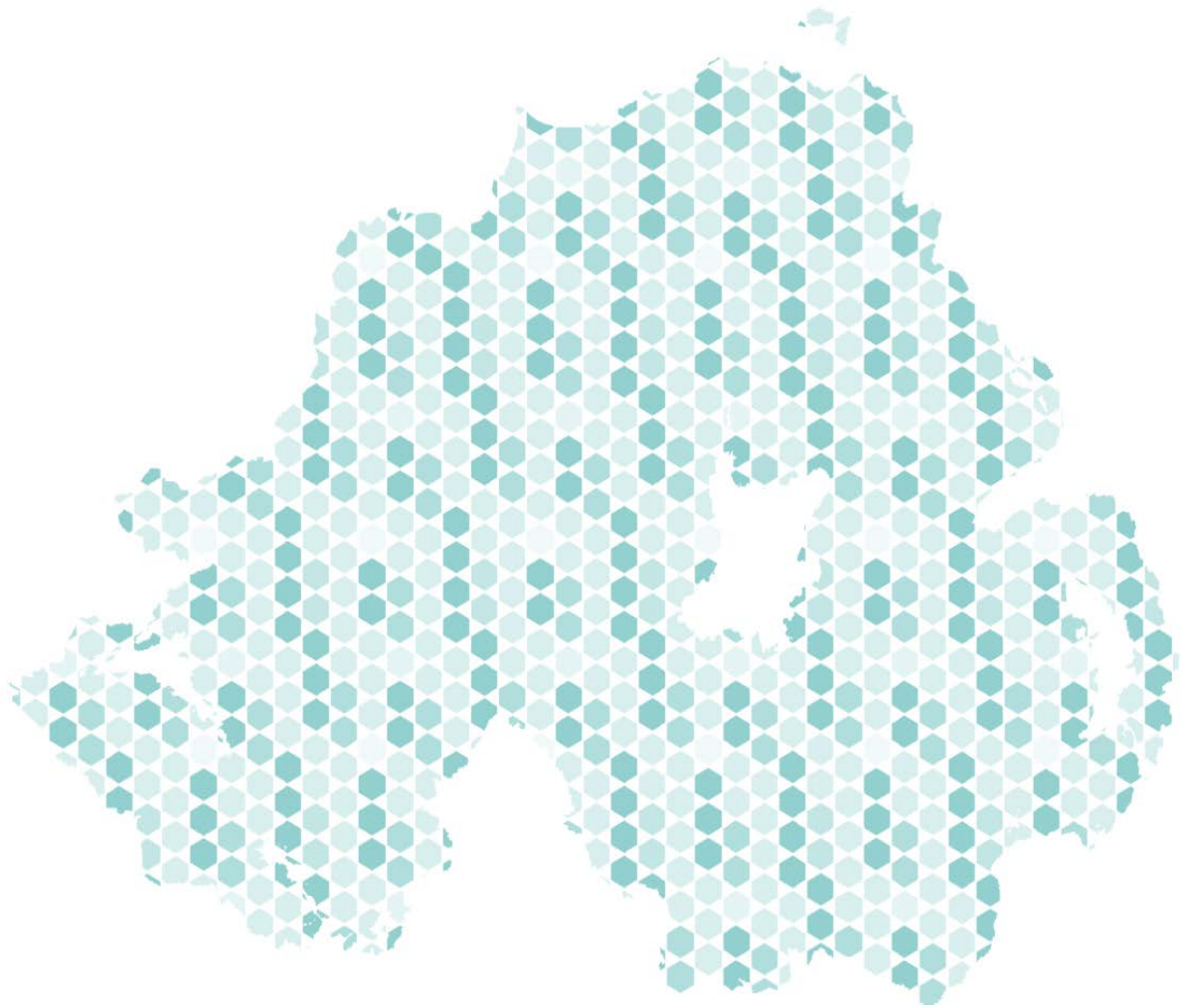


YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Epicentre, Armagh

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
in May 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF THE EPICENTRE

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of the Epicentre in Armagh in April 2018¹, which concluded that the centre was evaluated as having important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The areas for improvement identified were the need to:

- develop further the young people's understanding of their learning to enable them to reflect on and evaluate their achievements and to plan for progression;
- improve the attendance and achievement rates for the young people; and
- ensure there is a coherent action plan that informs more accurately the future work of the centre that is agreed and understood by all of the staff and the young people.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in December 2018 and a follow-up inspection in May 2019 met with youth workers and officers from the EA. The ETI observed youth work sessions and scrutinised documentation. The centre provided a post-inspection action plan in April 2018 which indicated how the organisation was addressing the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection report. While the action plan indicated a number of actions for improvement, it lacked an appropriate baseline and clear specific targets to measure the impact of the required improvement in the interests of all the learners.

In the interval since the original inspection, the following actions and changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- there have been significant changes in relation to the leadership and management of the centre; the two full-time permanent members youth workers who were in place at the time of the inspection have resigned;
- a new senior youth worker who was appointed in January 2019 was unable to take up post;
- a new team leader was appointed in the Armagh area in September 2018 and a new senior youth officer appointed in January 2019;
- the team leader has assisted with the overall management of the centre and the facilitation of a number of programmes for young people in the centre;
- a new temporary 32 hours per week centre based worker has just been appointed very recently on a temporary contract;
- two youth support workers-in-charge were appointed with specific responsibilities for the day time and evening programmes;
- the Junior programme for 9-13 years of age has been extended to include an additional evening and a new programme for young people to bridge the gap between the junior and senior categories has been established;

¹ [youth-inspection-epicentre-armagh-city-county-armagh.pdf](#)

- the overall staffing complement has increased and now stands at seven part-time paid staff and ten volunteers; and
- staff training events have taken place including child protection and first aid training.

Key findings

- The loss of key staff has hampered the development of a coherent action plan to inform the future work of the centre. The current staff, including the very recently appointed youth worker-in-charge need time and space to develop a more appropriate response to the inspection findings. The post-inspection action plan needs to be reviewed and improved. A much clearer focus on and reduction of the number of actions necessary to bring about the improvement is required; supported by specific measurable targets to improve and impact positively on the experiences provided for the young people.
- The staff team, including senior staff and the part-time cohort of youth workers are dedicated and have worked hard to improve the attendance rates through the development of a number of targeted programmes. There has been improvement in the number of members registered at the centre; numbers have increased from 222 at the time of the original inspection to 286 during the follow-up inspection. The provision of an additional evening for the junior members and the creation of a number of new programmes is beginning to have a positive impact on the junior attendance rates. Going forward it will be important that the centre captures more accurately the data for each of these age groups and uses the information to inform better any future curricular programmes and provision for the young people.
- While there has been some improvement in the development of young people's understanding of their learning, there remains the need to enable the young people to reflect on and evaluate their achievements and plan for their progression in their personal and social development. This needs to be planned for and included in the new action plan.

Overall Effectiveness

The Epicentre needs to address important areas for improvement in the interests of all of the learners.

The follow-up inspection has identified the following areas for improvement:

- the post-inspection action plan needs to be revised and improved to include targets that are more specific and measurable and included in a revised controlled delivery agreement to reflect the new staffing arrangements;
- the centre needs to continue to increase the attendance and achievement rates for young people; and
- there is a need to build on the good work already in place to better develop the young people's understanding of their learning to enable them to reflect on and evaluate more accurately their achievements and plan for progression.

The ETI will conduct a further follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

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