

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

YOUTH INSPECTION

Waveney Youth Centre, Ballymena,
County Antrim

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in May 2022



Providing Inspection services for:
Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Follow-up to the inspection of Waveney Youth Centre, Ballymena

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Waveney Youth Centre in November 2018, which concluded that the centre needed to address important areas for improvement identified in the interest of all of the learners. The following areas needed to be addressed:

- to strengthen the leadership and management to progress the key actions and targets further so that there is a clear plan to guide the future direction of the work with the young people;
- to provide relevant continuing professional development to support the part-time youth workers more effectively in their roles; and
- to increase the membership and develop participative structures within the centre so that the young people are effectively engaged in the management of the provision.

The ETI were presented with an appropriate action plan following the original inspection and an updated action plan at the follow-up inspection in May 2022.

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

- A centre based youth worker was appointed in January 2020.
- The staff team has increased to ten part-time paid staff and there are also now six junior leaders working in the centre.
- A system of supervision has been established for the part-time staff.
- The Education Authority (EA) have introduced a three year curriculum delivery planning cycle.
- The young people are engaged in two youth fora for the junior and senior sections of the membership which meet regularly.
- The staff have been supported by the EA CADi team¹ and have produced a promotional video for the centre.
- In partnership with another local youth centre, the young people are engaged in a 'Horizons' programme².

¹ CADi is the EA Youth Service Creative Arts and Digital Innovators Programme

² The EA Horizons Programme aims to reduce educational underachievement and develop youth leadership within local communities.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the centre staff provided online weekly support through the 'Stay Connected' programme³. As part of the 'Eat Well Live Well initiative'⁴, 53 young people were supported by staff who delivered food parcels and provided emotional wellbeing support. In addition, three young people were employed at the centre to support the Eat Well Live Well Initiative.
- The young people were engaged in a sculptural design project facilitated by their youth workers and an artist which encouraged them to discuss their emotions regarding the pandemic.

Key findings

- There has been good progress in developing the part-time staff through a range of appropriate youth work courses. In a supervision survey, the staff report that they are supported, valued and have opportunities to reflect on their practice and explore issues. To develop further their youth work skills, the staff require additional support in their use of informal group work, particularly in relation to enhancing the programme of activities for junior members.
- The staff provide a good range of programmes that interest the young people, in particular, the young people enjoy the creative activities and roller skating in the main hall.
- Through regular meetings and a well-structured agenda, the youth fora in the centre have improved the engagement of young people in the decision making processes. To continue to build on the positive changes which have been made, the staff need to share more clearly their rationale for decisions and act promptly on the suggestions from the young people.
- The young leaders report that they enjoy their leadership roles when working with the junior members and highlight the benefits of residential experiences to enhance their youth work skills.
- The planning for improvement across the provision requires further development. Attendance figures are too low; in particular, in the senior section of the membership. The EA Curriculum Delivery Agreement and Action Plan do not reflect the need to retain and attract members. The post-inspection action planning does address this issue, but needs to have more measurable and realistic targets.

³ The Stay Connected Programme was developed as an online support service for young people during COVID-19.

⁴ The Eat Well Live Well Programme supported young people during COVID-19 through the provision of breakfast and lunch food boxes.

Overall effectiveness

Waveney Youth Centre needs to address important areas for improvement in the interests of all of the learners. There remains the need to:

- develop a coherent overarching plan for the centre with clear, realistic and measurable targets; and
- to increase the membership across all age groups and improve the system for recording attendance and registration;

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

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2022

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the [ETI website](#)

Follow us on  [@ETI_news](#)  [@ETInews](#)  InsPIRE