

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

YOUTH INSPECTION

West Belfast Area Project, Belfast

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in June 2022



Providing Inspection services for:
Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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Follow-up to the inspection of West Belfast Area Project, Belfast

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection of West Belfast Area Project in February 2019, which concluded that the project needed to address important areas for improvement identified in the interest of all of the learners. The following areas needed to be addressed:

- to improve the quality assurance of the provision through more effective monitoring and evaluation of the work of staff at all levels; and
- to agree and develop a shared strategic vision for the future of the project.

The ETI conducted a second follow-up inspection in June 2022. The ETI were presented with an appropriate updated action plan during the follow-up inspection.

In the interval since the first follow-up inspection, the following key actions and changes which affect the work of the project have taken place:

- the Education Authority(EA) reviewed the West Belfast Area Project in Nov 2019;
- the project staff team was restructured and all of the current team members are now on permanent contracts;
- the project staff supported the development of 'local voice' youth groups in three youth centres;
- the project team was relocated to Colin Youth Development Centre;
- a senior youth worker was appointed in Oct 2020 to manage the project and a further senior youth worker was appointed in May 2021;
- monthly staff meetings, supervision meetings and quarterly moderation meetings were established for all staff;
- the EA developed the Curriculum Delivery Agreement and target monitoring processes; and
- the project is now working in partnership with the detached youth work co-ordination team for west Belfast.

Key findings

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the project staff provided extensive support for young people through online group work, detached youth work and home visits, which included wellbeing and activity packs which the staff had developed.

- The leadership of the area project has appropriately reviewed the provision and staffing and there is now a shared strategic vision for the future of the project. In addition, they introduced annual reports which affirm and celebrate the youth work practice and inform future planning. Effective processes, such as monthly supervision, are now in place to support the youth work staff and contribute to their professional development.
- Quality assurance across the project has improved with young people involved in the evaluation of programmes. The staff have begun to evaluate their practice regularly, which is building their capacity as individual practitioners and collectively as a staff team. They have identified appropriately the need to develop further their reflective practice to continue to inform and improve the work going forward.
- The staff team have participated in a range of relevant training programmes which supports well their work with the young people, for example, training on domestic abuse and play. At the time of the follow up inspection, a stakeholder event on domestic abuse was delivered in Colin Youth Development Centre for young people from across south and west Belfast.
- In discussions with the young people supported by the project, they highlighted how their views and ideas are sought and valued by their youth workers. The young people were confident, articulate and enthusiastic about developing their skills in becoming young leaders. They were working collaboratively to plan engaging activities that younger members can enjoy, and through these experiences were also developing their own teamwork and planning skills.
- There is greater involvement of young people in participative structures and decision making across the project. For example, the young people spoke highly of their participation in the Youth Voice forum, where they reflected on and discussed their views on youth work. The project staff have planned appropriately to develop further opportunities for young people to participate in Youth Voice across the area.
- The project staff are working more effectively with other local youth providers to identify gaps in provision, whilst avoiding duplication. The leadership and staff have placed a strong focus on developing and maintaining beneficial partnerships which meet the needs of young people across the west Belfast area; for example, the west Belfast detached youth work coordination team.

Overall effectiveness

The West Belfast Area Project now demonstrates, the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

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