



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



Providing Inspection Services for
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Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

Pilot's Row Youth Centre Derry

Inspected: April 2009

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1. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

1.1 Pilot's Row is a joint community and youth facility which opened in 1980. It is co-funded by the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) and Derry City Council and is situated in the Bogside area of the city. A new youth wing was officially opened in 2009, providing a space dedicated to young people. According to the multiple deprivation measures in the Nobel Indices the area is in the top five per cent of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. The staff report that there is low educational achievement for the young people and adults in the community. The facility offers a wide variety of activities for all ages and abilities and is open to the public from 8.30 am until 10.30 pm, six days per week.

1.2 Following a period of reorganisation, a senior youth worker was appointed in September 2008. The senior youth worker is responsible for the overall management of the youth centre, the community development programme and the youth provision. She has line management responsibility for a full-time community development worker and an area youth worker. The area youth worker's role has changed recently with his main work being delivered in the youth centre. The community development worker works generally during the day, with responsibility for the organisation of the community centre programmes.

1.3 There are two full-time building supervisors, a full-time clerical officer and 42 part-time paid and voluntary staff including specialist tutors. An advisory committee offers guidance on the operation of the youth centre; it comprises of three Derry City councillors, WELB representatives, Derry City Council employees and community representatives. At the time of the inspection, young people were not represented on the advisory committee.

1.4 The youth centre offers youth activities and programmes for young people aged 5-25 years four evenings a week, Monday to Thursday. The current youth programme includes a junior club (aged 5-10 years) two afternoons a week, an intermediate club (aged 11-15 years) four evenings a week and a senior club (aged 16 plus) four evenings a week. An additional evening drop-in is planned to begin in May 2009 on Friday evenings for intermediate and senior members.

1.5 According to figures supplied by the youth centre there are 221 registered members with almost half in the under ten age group. There are 42 registered senior members; at the time of the inspection there were fewer than 20 who attended the evening sessions observed.

Table 1 Total membership over last three years.

	Male 4-9	Female 4-9	Male 10-15	Female 10-15	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19+	Female 19+
2006/07	194	133	122	115	80	23	20	8
2007/08	193	147	130	120	86	26	20	8
2008/09*	120	149	66	108	59	58	21	10
2008/09 (Youth centre membership only)	66	40	35	38	11	24	5	2

** Includes membership from single activities and courses.*

Table 2 Attendance of core members who attend general youth work programmes and those who attend for special activity sessions only.

	1 session	1-3 sessions	3+ sessions	Special Activity 1	Special Activity 2	Special Activity 3
Number of Young People	40	65	10	145	75	20

1.6 In the membership table, the youth centre began a new system of registration and recording in 2008/09 for attendance at the youth wing activities and programmes only, which accounts for the apparent drop in numbers. Other young people, who are not registered members of the youth centre, attend specialist activities including traditional music sessions, judo, kick-boxing, sewing, dance and arts activities. The new management and youth work structure in the youth centre is aware of the need to review further the current system of the registration and recording of all users, and the need to increase numbers of young people attending the youth wing specifically.

2. EVIDENCE BASE

2.1 The inspection team observed 22 hours of youth work during eleven sessions. They held discussions with the area youth officer (AYO), all of the staff within the youth centre and with a representative group of young people. In two separate focus groups, representing two different age groups, a total of 31 young people discussed how well they are cared for, guided and supported. The inspection team also examined relevant documentation, including the strategic action plan, evidence files and copies of monitoring reports.

2.2 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the youth centre is very good. The young people spoke positively about the youth centre and acknowledged the attractive and caring environment. From the discussions there is evidence that they are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety or care and well-being. They also spoke confidently about the advice and support given by staff, and, in particular, the efforts made to promote positive behaviour in the youth centre.

2.3 The youth centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education and include the training of all youth work staff in child protection by the WELB. The following area needs to be addressed: the youth centre needs to ensure that when the young people use the community entrance for specific youth activities they are recorded and monitored appropriately.

3. THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS ATTAINED BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE

3.1 Overall the achievements and standards attained by the young people who attend the youth centre are good. The majority of the registered membership participate regularly in activities including football, pool, table-tennis, kick-boxing and computer games. A majority

of the senior and intermediate members have participated in a number of short courses and projects that have developed skills and knowledge in social issues including drugs and alcohol and young women's rights. Other programmes, including a DJ techniques course, have developed music-mixing skills and have increased the young people's confidence. A minority of the young people spoke about the positive learning and the development of their team work skills as a result of working together in the senior members' committee. The young people display a sense of enjoyment and high levels of motivation, particularly in the junior and intermediate clubs.

3.2 In the junior club the youth workers provide young people with an appropriate and well-organised programme. For example, a recent anti-bullying initiative involved a group of eight junior members who responded well and spoke positively about the impact of the learning on their behaviour and on the behaviour of others.

3.3 There are good opportunities for the young people to achieve appropriate accreditation and to develop their personal and social skills through their participation in the Growing, Learning and Development (GLAD) programmes. There is evidence of good planning matched to the needs of the young people. One of the GLAD programmes is delivered to a group of year 12 pupils from a local post-primary school. The pupils spoke highly of the two-year programme; they stated that the course has increased their self-confidence and, in particular, their presentation skills. The youth work staff reported that good links have been established between the link teacher and the youth workers in relation to the planning and delivery of the programme.

3.4 There are good opportunities for the young people to progress to leadership roles including the youth centre's senior members' committee, the peer leadership course and two members represent the youth centre on the Derry City area youth forum. Young people were also fully involved in the organisation and presentations for the opening of the new youth wing, including helping with the design of the opening programme leaflet and one member made the introductory speech to the invited guests. A small group of young people were also involved in the design and publication of the first edition of the Pilot's Row Youth Centre newsletter for Spring 2009. The youth workers spoke highly of the work of the members, who met regularly and provided good ideas for the layout and content of the leaflet.

3.5 The staff have made a good start in the promotion of healthy eating and oral hygiene through a new initiative in the youth centre, including a visit from an oral hygienist to the junior members. There is a need to offer a healthier choice in the tuck shop to progress this initiative further.

3.6 The 'Eden Place Arts Centre' project has been in the youth centre since 1993. Although many of the courses and activities offered are for adults, there are specific programmes aimed at young people. Youth centre members attend arts and crafts programmes including children's arts and pottery and 'Arty Ideas for Kids'. The arts programmes are facilitated by arts tutors, mainly in the afternoons and the young people enjoy the activities in a structured environment.

4. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.1 Overall the quality of the youth work provision is satisfactory; the youth programme broadly reflects the youth work curriculum, 'Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice'. In almost all of the sessions observed the young people work well together. In the junior club in particular the young people are developing respect for themselves and others as highlighted through the boundaries agreed around acceptable behaviour between the staff and the young people. In the intermediate and senior clubs there are opportunities for the young people to explore personal attitudes and opinions through their involvement in the specialist programmes including arts, drama and personal development courses. Overall there is a good ethos of participation and a commitment by the youth work staff in preparing the young people for participative roles.

4.2 In the structured group work programmes, the provision of accredited programmes in Open College Network (OCN) and Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) provide good opportunities for the young people to develop their political awareness through discussion and debates with peers on sensitive issues in a safe environment.

4.3 In most of the specific youth programmes delivered by the full-time youth workers there is evidence of adequate planning for each session and the setting of learning objectives that are agreed and understood by the young people. There is a need, however, to develop in the part-time staff a greater understanding of the role and purpose of youth work, and to utilise more effectively the general youth work sessions to develop the interests of members through meaningful discussions. The senior youth worker needs to develop more effectively, and to monitor, the quality of the informal engagement between the staff and young people.

4.4 In a minority of the sessions, the workers have begun to develop the use of assessment to inform their planning, for example, through the documentation of issues in the daily recording log book. It is important that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities at the beginning of each evening session and that, where possible, a short evaluation is recorded at the end of each of the evening sessions.

4.5 The youth centre has long established links with members of the local community who use the dining facilities at lunchtime and a number of senior citizens and adults who are involved in programmes such as sewing, basket weaving, line dancing and arts programmes. The youth centre can build on these links by, for example, developing inter-generational programmes between the young people and older members of the community.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 Overall, the quality of the leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting the young people is satisfactory. The WELB management has worked well with the advisory committee and others, including the community, to develop the needs of the young people in the youth centre through the provision of very good quality physical resources in the new youth wing. There is a need to plan for the more effective use of the good facilities. In particular the information and communication technology resources are currently under used. The youth workers could make better use of the interactive whiteboard to enhance learning.

5.2 The AYO has regular planned and recorded supervision and support meetings with the senior youth worker and, on occasions, these meetings include the area youth worker. The AYO provides useful comments and feedback through the use of external moderation visits, which help inform the planning within the youth centre.

5.3 The senior youth worker is developing the use of evidence files for all youth workers. In the best, but less frequent, practice the evidence files contain examples of individual projects that have realistic objectives and related outcomes for the young people. There is a need for the management to ensure a more consistent approach in the use of evidence files as one way of supporting staff.

5.4 The WELB has demonstrated a commitment to quality improvement through the development of a new strategic action plan for the youth centre for 2008/09 that includes key priorities and related actions, tasks, indicators and evidence. The strategic action plan contains 27 main tasks, the majority of which are related appropriately to the setting up of a new management and operational structure in the youth centre. The WELB has recognised the need to develop the strategic action plan for year 2 to include more specific actions and tasks that relate to quality outcomes for the young people.

5.5 There have been significant changes in the roles and functions of the staff in the past year that has developed a new team who are dedicated and hard-working. There is a need to define further the roles and responsibilities for all of the full-time staff in order to achieve the strategic and operational functions of the youth centre including the recording of outcomes for the young people. As the role of managing the youth centre is crucial, there is also a need to develop the management skills of the senior youth worker through appropriate management training.

5.6 The WELB are currently carrying out a financial audit. There is a need to ensure that the historical funding system is reviewed so that the resources allocated to the youth centre are used directly for youth provision.

6. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

6.1 The strengths of the provision include:

- the good opportunities for a minority of the young people to achieve appropriate accreditation in youth work courses including OCN and ASDAN awards;
- the very good quality of the provision for the members of the afternoon junior club as a result of the good organisation and commitment of the staff involved;
- the good variety of activity-based programmes on offer which meets well the needs of the young people and encourages active participation;
- the attractive and caring environment and the mutual respect which exists between the young people and the youth workers;

- the very good youth work skills of the senior youth worker; and
- the good opportunities provided for a minority of the young people to progress to leadership roles.

6.2 As areas for improvement the inspection has identified the need:

- to define clear roles and responsibilities for all of the staff, especially the full-time staff, to support the new strategic and operational objectives of the youth centre;
- to utilise more effectively the planned and unplanned learning experiences for the young people in the intermediate and senior clubs; and
- to include in the strategic action plan more focused targets which can be monitored, evaluated and reviewed against the outcomes for the young people.

7. **CONCLUSION**

7.1 In most of the areas inspected, the quality of the youth work provided by this youth centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management and achievements and standards which needs to be addressed if the needs of all of the young people are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the youth centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

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