

Regional Advisory Group

Notes of the meeting held on 04 September 2017 at 10.00 am in the Education Authority Offices, 40 Academy Street, Belfast, BT1 2NQ

Present	
Clare Mangan (EA) – <i>Chair</i>	Brenda McGrann (Youth Link)
Alison Morgan (EA) – <i>Minutes</i>	Dreena Evans (DE)
Arlene Kee (EA)	Liam Curran (EA)
Cathy Galway (DE)	Keith McCaughtery (Youth Workers’ Alliance – North West)
Chris Quinn (NIYF)	John Peacock (YMCA)
Derek Capper (YCNi)	Ciarán Mac Giolla Bhéin (Fóram na nÓg)
Caroline Redpath (Youth Action NI)	Joe Hawkins (EA)
Michael Reid (Young Farmers’ Clubs of Ulster)	John Meikleham (Scout Foundation)
Rebecca Russell (Young Person via NI Youth Forum)	Stephen Dallas (EA)
Brian Gibson (Youth Workers’ Alliance – Belfast)	Catherine Powell (DoE)
Lyndsey Branniff (EA)	Andrea Kelly (DoC)
Jacqueline O’Laughlin	
Anne McCready (DoE)	
Apologies	
Simon Sloan (DoC)	Tara Connelly (NI Youth Forum)
Siobain Byrne (EA)	Peter Moge (NI Youth Forum)
Brenda Shearer (DE)	Julie Jamieson (Dept for Economies)
June Wilkinson (DE)	Joanne Jones (ETi)

1 Welcome

Dr Mangan welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were given for June Wilkinson (DE), Brenda Shearer (DE), Julie Jamieson (Dept. for Economies), Joanne Jones (ETi) and Simon Sloan (Dep. For Communities). It was noted that there were many colleagues present attending as nominees to RAG today and a round of introductions was called.

2 Notes of Meeting held on 27 February 2017 and workshop notes dated 23 March 2017.

- Notes of RAG meeting – 27 February 2017 agreed.
- Notes of workshop held on 23 March 2017 agreed.

3 Matters Arising

- RAG – Terms of Reference

Discussion took place regarding the recent Voluntary Sector review of RAG's Terms of Reference. It was noted that the inception of RAG and Terms of Reference lay with the Department of Education and clarity was sought from the members involved in the recent independent review undertaken. Comment was made that some members felt RAG had moved on from its original conception and that meetings were for informing members rather than involving. It was also stated that feedback from the last RAG evaluation was never shared with the group. Overall, the members felt an evaluation of RAG (against the anticipated outcomes) should be conducted, considering the current state of play, the role of RAG and suggestions on how we can improve RAG within the context of Youth Services.

Dr Mangan agreed that it would be beneficial to hold a half day workshop in early October. Date to issue as soon as possible.

4 Review of Residential and Outdoor Education

Arlene Kee noted that the Education Authority was now concluding the consultation process of the Review of Residential and Outdoor Education giving due consideration to the feedback and alternative models received. Preliminary data and direction of travel would be reported to the group by way of a presentation today. Members would be invited to feed back on how we are engaging with the process in line with rationale and asked for their thoughts on the recommendations that would potentially go forward.

It was made clear to the group that the discussion on the Review would be limited ahead of consultation with EA Committees, staff and Trade Unions etc. Dr Mangan reiterated that the information being reported on was at its early stages and confidential in nature.

Questions & Feedback

- Discussion took place regarding the need for a clear and dedicated marketing strategy between the voluntary and statutory sectors. It was agreed that in order to maximise the resources available (for young people and youth services) we need to ensure everyone knows about what is on offer. Tackling known issues such as health, mental health alongside youth work can be directed through use of Outdoor Education.
- It was noted that we need a better link between experiential learning, curriculum and youth work.

Young People Feedback

- Young People value Outdoor Education and residential centres very highly
- Peripatetic services are seen as good so long as they do not replace residential experiences
- Young people welcome the fact that jobs would be protected
- Young People don't feel any of the centres should close but understand that savings have to be made
- We believe the centres should remain open on weekends for youth groups to use
- The idea of an online booking system is welcomed with details and information on every statutory centre available in Northern Ireland
- The idea of having centres specialise in certain activities to make the best use of the surrounding natural resources is very welcomed
- Young people might be concerned that the means of measuring outcomes of a residential would not reflect the true value of the experience
- We recognised the importance of staff having the same level of training across all the centres
- Young People would acknowledge that allowing organisations outside the education and youth work sector to use centres at a cost could potentially increase profit.

5 Regional & Local Funding Scheme

Arlene Kee presented to the group on the progress of the new proposed Regional and Local Funding Scheme. The current draft of the Project Initiation Document (PID) was distributed in hard copy to the group. Arlene noted that the consultation on the funding scheme proposals had not begun and this presentation and feedback session would provide the group with the pre-consultation progress. Feedback from the group today would be used to shape the proposals ahead of any formal consultation going forward. It was highlighted that engagement was still ongoing and any dates/timelines noted are draft and for illustration purposes only. Extensive support and workshops to the voluntary sector would be intrinsic to the successful of implantation process of the new scheme.

Comments & Feedback

- Comment was made as to the issue with duplication of funding in the voluntary sector of Regional organisations and their local member organisations. It was noted that EA is aware of the issue both with registration and funding and hopes to have accounted for this within the new anticipated processes.
- YCNI noted that an extensive lead time and consultation process would be welcomed in the sector as well as EA conducting an impact assessment of the new proposals that do go forward.

Young People Feedback

- Project funding very important in meeting the needs of young people - it must take strategic and flexible approach in its application
- Young People would welcome eligibility requirement in relation to youth work delivery and practice - i.e. only open to groups delivering youth work
- Recognition of the diversity of organisations throughout the youth sector
- There is an importance of recognising both local and regional youth work
- We should recognise the roles of RVYOs
- It is important to remember the importance of core funding in supporting and enabling youth work and inward investment to the sector
- We welcome the recognition that generic youth work is important
- The concept of transitional and phased approach welcomed
- Longer term funding is welcomed - i.e. more than 1 year
- Hearing and involving the voices of young people in helping shape youth services and grant giving process important.

6 RAG / LAG Conference Report

Dr Mangan highlighted that the RAG/LAG Conference report was available online at the RAG webpages.

<http://www.eani.org.uk/about-us/regional-advisory-group-for-youth/regional-advisory-group-meetings/4-september-2017/>

7 Network for Youth Pilot Evaluation

Dr Mangan highlighted that the Network for Youth Pilot Evaluation report was available online at the RAG webpages.

<http://www.eani.org.uk/about-us/regional-advisory-group-for-youth/regional-advisory-group-meetings/4-september-2017/>

8 Date of Next Meeting

A full day meeting would be scheduled to allow for discussion on:

- RAG process and Terms of Reference
- More detailed report on The Review of Residential and Outdoor Education
- Next phase detail regarding The New Local and Regional Funding Scheme