

Summary Comments and Feedback from Workshop

Group 1

1. RAG is good in principle and it does reflect the policy context in which we all work. Helps with communication between the youth service stakeholders. RAG provides a structured environment for the sector to come together and discuss key issues as well as share information.
2. The definition of *advisory* seems to be confusing for the group. Members were not fully convinced that they are involved in a full and meaningful way and that voluntary sector input was not always taken on board when decisions are made by EA. It was felt they are asked for input when decisions are close to being or already made. There are so many priorities in youth work that sometimes RAG is more reactionary than proactive. It was also felt that a disconnect between the sub-groups of RAG has increased as time has progressed.

Members would like an opportunity to add/comment on the RAG agenda. It would also be beneficial for young people to have input on agenda items on key issues important to them. It was noted that power dynamics within RAG can be a hurdle – for example, not being able to confidently question or feed back to the statutory sector staff team.

It was felt there is never enough time allowed to meet and fully engage with both their own sector/organisations and young people for meaningful feedback to RAG on the agenda items. A practical approach on the timing and engagement process is essential on both accounts as views are not fully represented or taken advantage of. Young people do feel their input into RAG is valuable and considered by EA.

3. Core components of RAG are positive. A mapping out of the connectedness of the elements which feed into and work alongside RAG would be beneficial i.e. RAG/sub groups and the parts within EA, like Children & Young People's Services Committee. Communication, timings and advance notice of papers is an issue. Timeframes were seen to represent the needs of EA/DE and not the sector. A focus on what are the key priorities within the Regional Youth Development Plan (RYDP) are specifically for RAG could be discussed and reported on.
4. The members recognise we now have Youth Work Alliance and Strategic Youth Forum which fills a gap in the representation for the sector. RAG need EA to realise within the TOR that everyone has a point of view and perspective to make note and use of. The members would like to have the flexibility to nominate new members. It would highlighted that perhaps local/district councils should be represented within the membership.

5. Collaboration is key for the voluntary sector and not consultation by the statutory sector. The ability to provide a platform of power and influence from the voluntary sector model through partnership, respect and trust. The process and speed at which we are working at within youth can be demanding. RAG itself has lost a bit of the overarching power with a lot of subgroups tackling similar issues.

Group 2

1. Sectoral engagement is the most important thing that RAG can offer the youth work sector.
2. Enough time for preparation in the voluntary sector and for them to consult with young people. Voluntary sector members would like feedback on the advice they are giving – is it being used? Is it not? If not why not?

A more detailed minute of the meetings would be beneficial. Currently we are only noting the meetings. Within the minutes it was requested that challenges from the members are clearly stated.

3. Rural representation is not sufficient on the RAG Committee. Evaluation of the young people's feedback being provided would be helpful. It was noted again that improved links with the RAG subgroups (to report to RAG) would be useful.

Group 3

1. Good aspects of RAG is that all views are represented and it is a formal forum that is recognised by EA and DE. RAG is a link to support the EA in its duties which in turn supports the voluntary sector. It is a communication link with the voluntary sector and young people. Input from young people is invaluable to the statutory sector. It is a link with local delivery and planning i.e. Local Advisory Groups (LAGs). The RAG agenda is flexible to allow for others to add to or feed into, for example members discussed the need to review the TOR of the group and this was taken forward. RAG has a good turnout rate which should be celebrated. Young people engaging at a strategic level is relatively uncommon but supports the policy and context in which we all conduct ourselves.
2. There is a need to link to the Regional Youth Development Plan (RYDP). Agenda for RAG should be led based on the RYDP priorities. We need a better linkage and feedback loop to LAG/RAG conferences and a better celebration of the things we have achieved at RAG. EA would like to give more feedback to the voluntary sector on where their feedback goes and how it is utilised. The RAG meeting venue could be rotated to considering our young people and the members. The timing of meetings could also be addressed, perhaps some evenings might be an option?

4. District Council representation and relevant agenda items stemming from their council meetings could be considered. It might be useful to have formal education items included on the agenda – this would allow RAG to engage with the Education Directorate so they understand youth work and direction of travel.

Academic links with universities etc would be beneficial to discuss the future training need of youth workers.

5. Timing of papers and agreed agendas needs consideration. We would like to have a better representation from LAG members moving forward to feedback into RAG. We need a better understanding of the roles of our stakeholders and partners.

General Comments

A number of general comments were made as outlined below:

- RAG should have a strategic (rather than operational) focus;
- changes in the youth work sector have allowed more connections across youth organisations;
- voluntary sector input on the timetabling of RAG meetings as well as agenda setting would be beneficial to counteract perceptions that EA set the agenda;
- Members noted the value of information sharing between DE, EA and sector;
- Opportunity to consider establishing a broader strategic group to discuss issues outside RAG ToF.

Amended Notes Issued: 17 September 2018