

RAG Meeting 22 November 2018

Workshop Feedback on Research

Multilingual Minds; The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Newcomer Children and Young People in Northern Ireland and the Role of the Education Authority Youth Service.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- 1. The commitment of sustainable funding for long term evidence based and research-informed strategic development of high quality EA Youth Service provision particularly in areas with significant immigrant populations, given the clear opportunities such provision offers for the flourishing of all young people in all of our communities in Northern Ireland.**
 - General consensus that this is a very positive step.
 - Importance of language was highlighted when funding is attributed to ‘newcomer’ young people.
 - Research acknowledged as addressing the gap in knowledge.
 - When do young people cease being newcomers?
 - A recognition of cultural differences and how CYPS is engaged in education should be recognised (social inclusion).

- 2. Given the challenges that Youth Service personnel encounter, develop and implement a strategy for staff care, development and support.**
 - Needs to be seen as a full service approach to Workforce Development Strategy (CPD).
 - Recognition that there may be specific stresses associated with developing this role.
 - Should include specific needs of individuals as well as general awareness needs (inclusion and development).

- 3. The development and implementation of an effective communication strategy both internal and external. Internally this should aim to establish clarity regarding terminology and access to relevant information. Externally this should seek to address cultural and linguistic barriers using effective marketing and translation services as necessary to ensure dissemination of key information, utilising social media and published documentation as appropriate.**
 - Current position spoken about; lack of strategy in the field.
 - Building capacity within the newcomer communities, seek volunteers and safeguarding procedures necessary.
 - Examine where others have undertaken research and establish what is working.
 - Pathways to leadership identified.

4. Utilise the school site as a local hub for engagement with all people, including newcomer children, for the purpose of providing a safe and trusted space, fostering friendships between children and young people across linguistic and cultural divides, and for collaborative delivery of effective informal education programmes.

- School site – One place parents and kids are used; Learning what youth work is.
- School is not the only place; there are other areas where young people and parents are engaging; Go to them ie community based organisations and deliver outreach.
- Need identified by organisations for on the ground youth work.
- Youth Service also provides a safe environment
- Is there a bias towards statutory youth work and is that reflected in research?
- There is good work happening that is not reflected in research.
- How to promote Youth Service as a safe place?

5. The development of informal education programmes that incorporate support with the development of English language competence and with schoolwork, in collaboration with colleagues in schools and community groups and delivered on the school site.

- Happens within community based projects
- What about young people over school age?
- Research around additional languages and in youth work.
- English learning as a second language supported with resources if language acquisition is a priority.

6. Reaching out to parents: The utilisation of the school site as a focus for relationship building with families and parents in order to inform, build trust, equip, support and work together for the good of young people and communities.

- Very important – Need to understand youth work intervention and what it means.
- Youth workers need time to work with families and communities.
- Need to build relationships and trust.
- Partnership work
- Department of Health – Family and parenting support strategy

7. The inclusion of bilingual volunteers recruited from the linguistic communities and the families to which newcomer children and young people belong, thus building trust and reflecting diversity within the workforce.

- Training available through various training organisations
- Level 2 youth work practice award.
- Ulster University – Widening access.
- More inclusive workforce generally.
- Need paid staff also – Create value.
- Working with community and countering prejudice – not reflected in research.
- Co-designed process to include view of newcomer community.

COLLABORATION, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Building on existing examples of successful collaboration by harnessing the expertise of EA Youth Service practitioners, key staff in schools and experts across other sectors, to foster mutual learning and enhancement of high quality provision for newcomer children and young people in NI.

- Expertise needed
- School as first hub? Other hubs within communities – How will they work together?
- Building capacity within each organisation
- There are barriers so how much can we do?
- Some expertise within voluntary sector as opposed to experts elsewhere.
- How does the Youth Service engage with other agencies?
- CRED reference group as a vehicle for such?
- Shared Education in schools – Where does this fit in to this?

2. The development of evidence based, research informed guidance in the form of an online resource toolkit to support Youth Service practitioners.

- Is it specific/cultures/language?
- Translation services/support.
- Will it be commissioned throughout the sector?
- Toolkit needed; help build/background information; driven by experts in the field
- Tailored for schools and youth work.

3. Identify an online platform to support learning, the collation and sharing of age appropriate resources, relevant information and guidance, an online portal to support the development of relevant expertise and support.

- Sounds similar to toolkit. Will this include a website?
- Resources need to be available to those on frontline.
- Need people to facilitate toolkit/resources.
- Need a person/unit to deliver.
- Online learning can be hitting and can suit some due to time commitments.
- Where are the newcomer areas?
- Who will be facilitating this? – Youth workers, volunteers?
- Resources need to be available to both statutory and voluntary
- Build capacity of people.

4. Provision of opportunities for face-to-face collaborative learning and dissemination of good practice amongst EA Youth Service practitioners and between sectors including education and health, such as networking forum and regional, national and international conferences.

- Cross over from other points.
- Need to share practice.
- Dedicate resources to frontline.
- Recognise work going on across sector and need to *join the dots*.

5. The development and delivery in collaboration with key educational providers of funded specialist training modules for Youth Service practitioners, possibly accessed online, in the following areas:

- **Mental health and wellbeing: Awareness, assessment and support for children and young people with clear relevance for the Youth Service context.**
 - Strength and resilience in newcomer children shone throughout the research..
 - Social interactions are key – increase language.
 - Irish medium youth work sector great example.
- **Understanding and supporting the needs of refugee and trauma experienced children and young people.**
 - Young people need to tell their own personal story.
 - Young people who are born here will have more education.
- **An introduction to linguistic diversity to include potential for basic up skilling in key languages represented in the communities of newcomer children and young people.**
 - Sharing learning – Linked back to Shared Education.