

Children & Young People's Services Directorate

Stakeholder Participation Update – *The Needs of Rural Young People*

Thursday 20th June 2019

RAG Group Meeting

Belvoir Youth Centre, Belfast



Strategic Context

- **Key aim is to develop an integrated approach to participation**
- **Priorities for Youth**
 - 3.3 - The active participation of young people should be fostered, supported and evident across all youth settings
 - 4.20.3 - EA, in collaboration with key sectoral partners and young people, will develop options for a flexible contemporary model for strengthening participation in the youth service at a local, sub-regional and regional level. The model...must take into account existing and emerging participative structures and forums, but must link effectively to the delivery of the RYDP
- **Children's Services Co-operation Act (N Ireland) 2015**
 - Children and Young People's Strategy**
 - To ensure the participation and involvement of children, young people, families and communities in the integrated planning process



Participative process

- Local Advisory Group (LAG) members are hosting these participative design events along with Senior Youth Officers and Senior Youth Workers
- Key Themes including this one, on the Needs of Rural Young People have been identified by the Regional and Local Assessment of Need
- Each Senior Youth Officer will also hold 1-2 participation events identified by LAG, based on area based issues and which will contribute to the RYDP
- LAG members, including young people have led, supported, publicised and engaged with this regional event and will do so for local participation events



Aim of the Event

- Increased participation of children and young people and other Youth Service Stakeholders on key themes and to identify the issues surrounding the rural needs of young people
- To discuss and identify the views associated with the issues identified by young people and other stakeholders and outline how these can be addressed by Youth Services
- Engagement on the development of the key themes for the Regional Assessment of Need and the Regional Youth Development Plan 2020-2023
- Each event has been a co-design process with LAG members, therefore each event is unique



Why the needs of Rural Young People?

- More than one third of young people from Northern Ireland live in communities that have been defined as rural
- For many children and young people, living in a rural community presents many challenges, including boredom and isolation
- There are a lack of facilities and access to services which other young people and people generally don't understand
- There is a need for young people and other key stakeholders to advise on the development of services in these areas to ensure the authentic voice of people in rural communities is captured



Event details

Monday 8th April 2019 - Lisnaskea Youth Centre, Fermanagh

- 102 people in attendance – 76 young people and 26 adults
- Key stakeholders included local Councillors, Community and Voluntary Sector representatives, PSNI, Translink, Schools, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and EA Staff, including Head of Service

Attendance Group	Number
Young People	64
Local Advisory Members	19 (7 adults, 12 young people)
Regional Advisory Members	0
Youth Work Staff	14 (9 EA, 5 Voluntary Sector)
Statutory Partners	5



Event details

Thursday 11th April 2019 - The Glens Youth Club, Cushendall

- 80 people in attendance - 42 young people and 38 adults
- Key stakeholders included a DE RAG member, Youth Workers from local EA and Voluntary Youth Service, including Head of Service, Youth Work Alliance representative and representatives from PCSP, TBUC and the PSNI

Attendance Group	Number
Young People	37
Local Advisory Members	11 (6 adults, 5 young people)
Regional Advisory Members	2
Youth Work Staff	25 (13 EA, 12 Voluntary Sector)
Statutory Partners (PCSP, TBUC, PSNI)	5



Key Findings – Lisnaskea

- Transport is a major disadvantage to accessing services and youth provision. This is evident more so in evenings and weekends and leads to heightened sense of isolation and loneliness among young people, which may lead to poor mental health
- The ability to communicate with others was seen as a key challenge due to a lack of internet access. Youth Centres with wifi access would attract more young people to attend
- Young people highlighted that whilst there are numerous youth centres and programmes these are not adequately advertised so they are often unaware of what is available for them to engage in
- It was felt that further education, skills development and training is limited for rural young people due to limited access and internet connections. Youth Services could provide additional opportunities for learning and development
- Many of the young people highlighted that Youth Services provided a safe space and positive opportunities for volunteering and leadership
- Youth programmes in rural areas can often be sports based; there is a need to develop the curriculum to incorporate more music, arts and drama and support regarding mental health
- Youth services in rural areas are often single identity and young people have limited opportunities to mix with those from different backgrounds



Key Findings – Cushendall

- Young people felt positive about living in a rural area and stated there was less crime so they felt safer in their own community
- Young people have a strong sense of belonging in rural areas but often felt more open to peer pressure when having to go to towns or more urban areas for school, social and recreational purposes
- Stakeholders identified that they had limited or no access to key services in rural areas for example, health, leisure, PSNI and social activities. Where these services existed they tended to be offered at certain times and were not always accessible
- Young people expressed concern about not being able to be themselves or being judged outside of their own rural areas
- Mental health and pressures relating to school and exam stress are key issues; these are heightened in rural areas due to lack of services or specialist support
- There are limited opportunities to mix or meet with young people from different cultures and backgrounds as villages and hamlets tend to be predominantly one religion or ethnicity
- There is a lack of access to after school or evening programmes and the cost of travelling to University or College limits career choices



Recommendations – Lisnaskea

- There should be more accessible youth provision at weekends and after school / twilight programmes, rather than set evening times that are often difficult for young people to attend
- There should be a wider curriculum for young people to access in youth settings that is beyond sport and activity based i.e. first aid programmes, LGBT&Q programmes, leadership programmes, CV and employability programmes, farming, road safety and outdoor learning programmes, etc.
- There should be a more collaborative approach between youth providers to address gaps in provision
- There should be greater access to transport or mobile youth units in more rural settings that can be deployed one night a week in the more rurally isolated areas; this should have Wi-Fi access
- Youth Centres in rural areas should have wifi access to attract more young people to attend
- There should be further opportunities within youth service for rural young people to mix more and participate in cross community activities/programmes
- Youth Service provide many volunteer and training opportunities for young people, but this should be advertised better and there should be further consideration of venue/timings



Recommendations – Cushendall

- To collaborate with other partners, stakeholders and providers to ensure that communities of interest such as LGBTQ, Young Carers and Ethnic Minorities who live in rural areas are supported to access services and/or that services are designed to meet their needs
- To provide opportunities for young people from rural areas and urban areas to engage in programmes together to enable them to explore issues and identify; this could be through the TBUC programme
- Capacity building for voluntary sector groups to enable increased engagement of the voice of young people from rural areas in generalist and targeted provision
- Resource allocations could be rural weighted taking into account the need to provide additional transport and often hire of accessible premises
- EA to work with and make better use of schools especially during evenings, weekends and school holidays



Voice of Young People

- Causeway Coast and Glens Animation
- Fermanagh, Omagh and Mid Ulster Video



Questions

