

REPORT

RAG/LAG Participation Event

Causeway Coast and Glens

Needs of Rural Young People

Thursday 11th April 2019

The Glens Youth Club



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Youth Development Plan (RYDP) 2017-2018 included key actions arising from the Regional Assessment of Need and addressed the deficit in information regarding youth provision in rural areas and the needs of rural young people.

The report noted that whilst young people growing up in rural communities faced many issues and challenges, the findings were limited and incomplete and the extent of the challenges facing these young people were not fully explored.

The Causeway Coast and Glens Regional Participation Event on the needs of Rural Young People, took place on Thursday 11th April in the Glens Youth Club, Cushendall with 80 attendees to support the engagement with stakeholders on the key themes for the Regional Assessment of Need and the Regional Youth Development Plan for 2020-2023.

The interactive event enabled the young people and adults to participate in workshops that had been designed and led by young people. Workshops were delivered and supported by Glens Youth Council, FLARE, Ballycastle Youth Centre, Portrush Youth Centre, Outdoor Learning Service and PSNI.

Key stakeholders who attended the event stated that young people are socially isolated as a result of limited access to facilities, transport and services.

Young people feel disadvantaged to their peers who live in urban areas due to limited opportunities that are available to them.

There is a lack of awareness as to what opportunities they can avail of and lack of access to employment opportunities for young people in rural areas.

Key recommendations were to review Youth Service delivery taking into consideration different operating times and patterns to meet the challenges faced by young people in accessing provision. Consideration should also be given to after schools and homework support.

There should be increased collaboration between voluntary and statutory providers to ensure greater participation of young people and to increase opportunities.

Finally, Youth Service should provide wider access to Youth curriculum to meet the assessed needs such as accredited programmes, residential, thematic programmes and mental health programmes.

1.1 Introduction

The Causeway Coast & Glens LAG members including young people have led, supported, publicised and engaged with the regional event at The Glens Youth Club on the needs of rural young people. The Key Themes of the Needs of Rural Young People has been identified by the Regional and Local Assessment of Need.

1.2 Aims

- 1.2.1 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.
- 1.2.2 To discuss and identify concerns around the issues identified by young people and other stakeholders and outline how these can be addressed by Youth Services.
- 1.2.3 Engagement on the development of the key themes for the Regional Assessment of Need and the Regional Youth Development Plan 2020-2023.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 To host a Participative Stakeholder Engagement Event in The Glens Youth Club.
- 1.3.2 To provide opportunities via interactive workshops for young people to discuss issues and concerns surrounding the rural needs of young people.
- 1.3.3 To provide opportunities for RAG, LAG and Key Stakeholders to network and to discuss key issues including mental health and the needs of rural young people.

2.1 Programme Design

- 2.1.1 The Senior Youth Officer alongside LAG members and young people designed the format for the regional event. Key stakeholders and RAG members were invited to attend.
- 2.1.2 LAG members including young people led, supported, publicised and engaged with this regional event.
- 2.1.3 Young people from Ballycastle and Portrush Youth Centres who facilitated workshops had a number of planning and support meetings with their youth workers to prepare for their workshops.

2.2 Methods Used

- 2.2.1 Workshops were designed to provide an interactive format to support young people and stakeholders to identify and discuss issues surrounding the needs of rural young people.
- 2.2.2 The event was opened by a young leader from The Glens Youth Club. There were also 2 inputs from guests speakers.
 - Lynsey Branniff, Head of Service set the context in line with EA Youth Service Policy.
 - Rory McLaughlin gave an update on the findings of the rural research.
- 2.2.3 Flare Team delivered the Adult Engagement Workshop.
- 2.2.4 Qwizdom was used to gather quantitative data but the young people struggled with the handsets so information gained was limited.
- 2.2.5 Young people had a choice of 5 Workshops.
 - Mobile Youth Unit – Mobile PSNI (Glens Youth Council)
 - Ballycastle Youth Club
 - Portrush Youth Club
 - Arts – Glens Youth Council
 - Outdoor Learning Service

2.2.6 The evaluations from the event were positive. The young people enjoyed the format and participating in the different workshops.

2.2.7 The feedback from the adults overall stated that the key aims of the event had been fully met. Twenty evaluations rated 'Very Satisfactory' and two evaluations rated 'Satisfactory'.

3 ATTENDANCE

3.1 Attendance

- 3.1.1 A total of 80 people attended the event (42 young people and 38 adults).
- 3.1.2 The young people were from Ballycastle Youth Club, Portrush Youth Club, The Glens Youth Club and The Glens Youth Council.
- 3.1.3 38 adults attended the event, including Youth Workers from local EA and Voluntary Youth Service (Sunlea YC, Portrush YC, Ballycastle YC, The Glens YC, Ramoan Parish Centre, The Vineyard, Year Project, St Canices YC).
- 3.1.4 EA staff facilitated workshops and supported the participation of young people (Flare, Regional Inclusion, Regional Training, Regional ICT, Regional Outdoor Learning Service, Head of Service and Information & Planning Officer)
- 3.1.5 There were Stakeholders from other bodies, PCSP and TBUC and 3 PSNI Officers

3.2 Attendance Figures

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

3.2.1 Apologies were noted from:

- 1 x Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster
- 1 x Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership
- 1 x Big Lottery
- 2 x LAG Members

4.1 Quantitative Data

4.1.1 Gender Data:

- 55% of the young people attending the event identified as being female
- 40% of the young people attending the event identified as being male
- 5% of the young people attending the event identified as being other

4.1.2 Age Data:

- 50% of young people attending were in the PFY age group of 9-13
- 48% of young people attending were in the PFY age group of 14-18
- 2% of young people attending were in the PFY age group of 18-25

4.1.3 Travel Time Data:

- 47% took 0-15 minutes to travel to school
- 19% took 16-30 minutes to travel to school
- 22% took 31-45 minutes to travel to school
- 6% took 46-60 minutes to travel to school
- 6% took over 61 minutes to travel to school

The data highlights the reliance on public transport or families to get to school. It highlights that for some young people there is a significant amount of their time spent travelling to and from school each day.

4.1.4 Youth Provision Data:

- 88% of young people stated there was youth provision in their area
- 12% stated there was no youth provision in their area
- 82% stated they attended their youth provision
- 55% were able to walk to youth provision
- 38% travelled there by car
- 3% other

No young people travelled to youth club by public transport.

4.2 Analysis of Evidence

4.2.1 The Key Themes emerging from the data include:

- Transport
- Access to Services
- Boredom
- Barriers to Learning
- Rural Issues

4.2.2 Transport: Young people having to travel to and from school and travel back out to youth club in the evening. Feedback stated that this does not leave a lot of time for homework. Access to public transport was limited and expensive. Young people relied on parents or family members for lifts.

4.2.3 Access to Services: Stakeholders identified that they had limited or no access to key services in rural areas:

- Health
- Youth
- Leisure
- PSNI
- Social

These services tended to be offered at certain times and not always accessible. Young people voiced the need for youth services to be inclusive and take into consideration the additional support for young people with disability, mental health issues, young carers or young people from the LGBTQ Community. Buildings, programmes and staffing allocation need to be fit for purpose, and to meet the needs of rural young people and need to be resourced to deliver quality youth work programmes.

4.2.4 Isolation: Young people felt isolated and there were no footpaths to enable them to walk to their friends or to youth club. There was concern about underage drinking or young drivers in rural areas and the need to address this issue.

4.2.5 Digital Divide: There is limited/interrupted access to mobile phone providers and Wi-Fi in rural areas. This can add to social isolation as young people cannot

connect with their peers out of school or access the internet for social or educational purposes such as completing homework or coursework.

- 4.2.6 Boredom & Having Nothing to do: Lack of opportunities in areas where there is little or no provision leads to boredom. Young people stated there is an issue with risk taking behaviour linked to boredom. There was also an issue in relation to not being understood by adults in the community and the influence of paramilitaries.
- 4.2.7 Barriers to Learning: Lack of access to after school or evening programmes, opportunities for accredited programmes, cost of travelling to University or College limits career choices. Lack of access to Wi-Fi, lack of peer support to de-stress from school, exams and coursework. These barriers all affect young people's ability to learn and achieve.
- 4.2.8 Job and Volunteering Opportunities: There are limited job and volunteering opportunities for young people in rural areas.
- 4.2.9 Inter-generational and Community Relations: These issues are significant in rural areas. 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.
- 4.2.10 Identity: Young people expressed concern about not being able to be themselves or being judged outside of their own rural areas. They had a strong sense of belonging in rural areas and felt more open to peer pressure when having to go to towns or more urban areas for school, social and recreational purpose.
- 4.2.11 Natural Resources: Need to explore and use the natural resources that exist in rural areas i.e. countryside, beaches, mountains. Young people felt positive about living in a rural area and that there was less crime so they felt safer in their own community.
- 4.2.12 Mental Health: 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. Young people are not aware of what services are available to them and how to access them.

5.1 Key Recommendations

- 5.1.1 EA to work with young people and stakeholders to co-design a model of youth work that meets the needs of rural young people.
- 5.1.2 EA to work with and make better use of schools especially during evenings, weekends and school holidays.
- 5.1.3 Rural Youth Workers to have access to EA transport fleet, minibus, 8-seater to support access of young people to programmes.
- 5.1.4 Roll out of new funding scheme to enable groups that have not been historically funded to apply for funding to deliver youth work in rural areas.
- 5.1.5 EA resource allocations to be rural weighted taking into account the need to provide transport and hire of premises.
- 5.1.6 EA to review the uptake of EA Regional Programmes inclusive of CADi, GSL, EA Trainee Youth Support Worker Scheme, Volunteering and made more accessible to young people in rural areas.
- 5.1.7 A Flare Worker dedicated to support the needs of rural young people.
- 5.1.8 Access to Wi-Fi and homework support in dedicated youth provision in hotspot areas.
- 5.1.9 Capacity building for the Community and Voluntary Sector to enable increased participation of young people from rural areas in generalist and targeted provision.
- 5.1.10 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.
- 5.1.11 To ensure one session per week in EA provision is targeted to be inclusive and cater for needs of young people with disabilities living in rural areas.
- 5.1.12 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.

5.2 Future Considerations

- 5.2.1 The retention and recruitment of professional staff continues to be a challenge in rural areas. A review of staff recruitment in rural areas needs to be carried out.
- 5.2.2 Access to Wi-Fi and telecommunication networks provides a barrier to learning. A communication strategy that reflects the needs of rural young people to address the barriers should be considered.
- 5.2.3 Transport issues and time spent travelling to school and youth clubs are challenging. EA could link with Government Bodies and Transport Providers to make them more aware of the needs of rural young people to ensure equality in policy and service delivery.
- 5.2.4 There needs to be investment in the youth estate in rural areas to ensure there is full access to the Youth Service Curriculum for both the generalist and targeted service.

