

REPORT

The needs of Rural Young People RAG / LAG Participation Event

Monday 8th April 2019
Lisnaskea Youth Centre @ 6:30pm – 9:00pm



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines a participative process that took place with key stakeholders and young people on the issue of rurality and how youth service can address and improve youth provision across rural areas within Northern Ireland. The event was hosted in Lisnaskea Youth Centre, Fermanagh on 8th April 2019 and engaged with 102 Youth Service stakeholders to address some of the key challenges for rural young people, along with highlighting recommendations to overcome the issues to accessing youth provision.

Key stakeholders who attended the event stated that living in their rural community presents many challenges, including boredom and isolation. Many stated that there are a lack of facilities and access to services which other young people and people generally don't understand which restricts employment opportunities and career goals.

There is a need for young people and other key stakeholders to support the development of services in these areas to ensure the voice of people in rural communities is captured.

Key recommendations include more accessible services which focussed on operating times, a review of curriculum and programmes on offer to young people, accessibility to provision that included transport as a wider issue and having access to internet in youth centres for educational purposes. Volunteering and employability was also seen as both a challenge and a recommendation for development.

1.1 Introduction

The aim of the engagement was to increase the participation of young people and other Youth Service Stakeholders in the development of the key themes for the Regional Assessment of Need and the Regional Youth Development Plan 2020-2023.

This was achieved through discussion around the issues identified by young people and other key stakeholders on the rural needs of young people and the development of recommendations on how these can be addressed by Youth Services.

2.1 Methodology

2.2 LAG members including young people developed, supported, publicised and engaged with the regional event at Lisnaskea Youth Centre on the needs of rural young people.

2.3 There were a variety of methodologies used to capture evidence throughout the participation event. Outlined below are range of the methods used:

- Menti-metre – online engagement tool through the use of iPads, to capture responses of a variety of questions used throughout the event. 10 tables of approximately 10-12 attendees had the opportunity to feedback and respond via the app. (see appendix 1 for results)
- Video interviews – a range of key stakeholders took part in a video interview to capture evidence of the event and feedback on the rural needs of young people.
- Flipcharts – flipcharts were placed around the room for participants to feedback, recommend or respond to the rural needs of young people.
- Evaluations – 98% of participants completed the satisfaction survey and evaluation of the event. (see appendix 2 for results)
- Guest speakers – 3 young people from the Omagh and Fermanagh area gave 3 inputs into their lives and experiences of living in a rural setting.
- Programme and invites – agenda and programme of the evening was on display and sent prior to the event (see appendix 3)

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ATTENDANCE

- A total of 102 attended the Engagement event with the majority of attendee's young people that represented both Fermanagh and Omagh and Mid-Ulster council areas.
- Key stakeholders included local Councillors, Community and Voluntary Sector representatives, PSNI, Translink, Schools, Omagh and Fermanagh District Council and EA Staff.
- 4 guest speakers – 3 young people giving their views and experiences (The life of a rural young person) and Rory McLaughlin (Information and Planning Officer)

3.1 Attendance Figures

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

4.1 Key Findings

- 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

5.1 Key Outcomes:

- 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

Index of Appendices: list of evidence sources available on request

- i Consultation Feedback
- ii Evaluation of events
- iii Programme and Invites



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