

Children & Young People's Services Directorate

Summary Feedback on Stakeholder Participation: Research and Innovation in Youth Work

Friday 6th December 2019

RAG Group Meeting

Ballykeel Youth Centre



Event details

Monday 4th November 2019 – Antrim and Newtownabbey - Parkhall Youth Centre, Antrim

- 62 people in attendance – 34 young people and 28 adults
- Key stakeholders included the Dept of Education, the Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations Strategic Forum, the Youth Work Alliance, Playboard, Volunteer Now, Bytes and Voluntary and Statutory Youth Work Staff.

Attendance Group	Number
Young People	24
Local Advisory Members	12 (10 young people, 2 adults)
Regional Advisory Members	4
Youth Work Staff	18 (6 voluntary, 12 statutory)
Others	4 (PlayBoard 1, Volunteer Now 1, Bytes 2)



Event details

Monday 4th November 2019 – Mid and East Antrim – Carrickfergus YMCA

- 73 people in attendance - 44 young people and 29 adults
- Key stakeholders included Dept of Education, Dept of Justice, Youth Work Alliance, Playboard and Voluntary and Statutory Sector Youth Work staff.

Attendance Group	Number
Young People	39
Local Advisory Members	6 (1 Adult, 5 Young People)
Regional Advisory Members	3
Youth Work Staff	19 (EA 14, Voluntary Sector 5)
Statutory Partners	3 (DoJ, EA 2)
Others	3 (PlayBoard 2, Media 1)



Key Findings – Antrim and Newtownabbey

Young people were asked to identify the things they are most passionate about and these included:

- Music and sport, as these were seen as opportunities to release emotions and express themselves.
- There were significant equality based issues raised particularly around disability and women's rights.
- Environmental issues was a key topic, as many young people had taken part in the climate change strikes.
- Culture and travelling was another passion, with young people wanting to interact more with others from different backgrounds and visit different areas in order to experience new cultures.

As part of discussions, they were then asked to identify, what helps them to live their dreams and be innovative:

- Many participants stated that they feel a sense of belonging and gain confidence in their youth projects and youth clubs, which help them to undertake new experiences. Youth Services also have an important role to play in signposting young people to additional opportunities.
- Participants highlighted the importance of having supportive people around you, particularly friends and family, but they also identified youth workers and teachers as people who believe in them and encourage them to live their dreams.
- Finally, participants identified some of the characteristics of people who live their dreams, which included being resilient, confident, determined and motivated, which were recognised as outcomes of youth work interventions.



Key Findings – Mid and East Antrim

The event aimed to capture information on difficult issues affecting young people that could benefit from an innovative approach, these issues are outlined below:

- Mental health and where to go for help was identified by all of the discussion groups.
- Physical health, appearance, body image and sexual health were all key subjects that young people felt needed to be open for discussion in a safe environment.
- Practical life skills ranging from living independently, through to being able to cook and clean, to managing finances were identified as being areas where young people need the chance to develop in a real environment.
- Concerns over employability and how to get a job were raised by most groups; they felt there wasn't practical help within formal education and a new approach was needed.
- The young people thought that sensitive subjects such as sexual assault, drugs, FGM, honour killings, paramilitaries and teen pregnancy were avoided within school and that these were amongst the things that they didn't feel comfortable to talk about in their schools.
- Adult stakeholders identified socialising safely as something that was a need for young people and they were concerned about the consequences of sexting and online sexual exploitation on the long term wellbeing of young people.
- Adult stakeholders also felt that youth workers need to know the latest trends and risks young people were subject to.



Research suggestions

The primary examples regarding how to engage young people in research, was online surveys, group discussions and educational visits to provision related to the research in order to learn from good practice examples.

Research topics identified through discussions included:

- Research into the effects of drugs on mental health
- Research into perspectives on different cultures
- Research into the provision of outreach work
- Research into how best to support young people to prepare for their future
- Longitudinal research into the impact of youth work, conducted by professional researchers to guide future initiatives and methodologies for working with young people



Recommendations – Antrim and Newtownabbey

- The use of IT is a key recommendation in relation to supporting young people with information, research and the use of online solutions to identify young people's interests, dreams and passions. IT was also identified as the best way to improve promotion and advertising of Youth Services, which should include the positive impact of youth work.
- Young people need more information on the positive outcomes of youth services and there should be more sharing of practice and celebrating achievements within and about youth services.
- The event was identified as an excellent opportunity to hear the voice of young people; there should be more engagement events where young people can express their views on their needs and dreams in order to support the design of youth programmes where young people can focus on topics they care about.
- The two most identified opportunities young people would like more of were travel and leadership. Whilst youth services already offer many of these programmes, there needs to be greater promotion of these and further opportunities provided.
- Consideration should be given as to how we better identify and promote the link between youth work participation with qualifications and the development of young people's employability.



Recommendations – Mid and East Antrim

- Youth services should provide more opportunities for over 18s, as participants felt that youth work seems to stop for them. This could be in the form of leadership and volunteering programmes.
- There is a need for more qualifications and courses in youth centres, not just for this age group but for all young people.
- Youth Services should provide better information on support groups that young people can access independently.
- Youth Services could make better use of social media platforms and websites where young people can seek information or request workshop topics and these can be used to promote the opportunities on offer.
- Young people would like access to more centres that use a drop-in approach as opposed to the more traditional style youth centre.
- Opportunities to travel internationally was a key recommendation for programmes that could be offered by youth services, along with cross-community work and inter-club trips. Identifying young people's need to experience different cultures and meet new people.

