

REGIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN - INTERIM FRAMEWORK 2015-2016

Introduction

The Department of Education's policy for youth work is set out in detail in *Priorities for Youth – "Improving young people's lives through Youth Work"*, published in October 2013. The policy document (PFY) provides the strategic direction and overall framework for the future delivery of DE funded youth services.

One of the key actions required within PFY is the development of a Regional Youth Development Plan (RYDP). It is intended that this will be a 3 year, strategic regional plan, focused on outcomes, to address the priorities and actions identified in PFY.

As an interim measure, in advance of the development of an initial RYDP, it has been agreed to develop a framework document based, as far as possible, on the initial RYDP guidance, to cover the period 2015-2016.

The Interim Framework will provide the context for the development of individual action/business plans, based on the current educational structures. References within PFY to a new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) will be taken to refer, at this time, to the Education Library Boards (ELBs) and the Youth Council. As the delivery bodies of the Department of Education, the implementation of actions arising from PFY will be taken forward by those organisations, within their respective governance arrangements.

On 9th September 2014, the Northern Ireland Executive agreed the introduction of a draft Bill to replace the five Education and Library Boards and their Staff Commission with an Education Authority. All references to ELBs will be replaced by the Education Authority when it is established. The role and functions of the Youth Council will remain unchanged.

Policy context

The strategic planning of youth services must reflect DE policy and be in response to the assessed need for youth work interventions, prioritised age ranges and priority groups.

'Priorities for Youth' firmly sets youth work in the context of the Department's overarching goals:

- Raising Standards for All; and
- Closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access and Equality.

It also considers the three enabling goals of:

- Developing the Education Workforce;
- Improving the Learning Environment; and
- Transforming the Governance and Management of Education.

The strategic aims of youth work are stated as:

- To contribute to raising standards for all and closing the performance gap between the highest and lowest achieving young people by providing access to enjoyable, non-formal learning opportunities that help them to develop enhanced social and cognitive skills and overcome barriers to learning; and
- To continue to improve the non-formal learning environment by creating inclusive, participative settings in which the voice and influence of young people are championed, supported and evident in the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes.

Planning for youth service provision should also take account of a range of educational policies and services and requires the proportionate targeting of services, based on need, with a clear focus on those most in need of additional support to achieve their potential, embrace diversity and overcome disaffection. Of

particular significance, in this regard, are the Department of Education's *Community Relations, Equity and Diversity Policy (CRED) Policy*, the Shared Education Programme and Recommendation 18 of the Review of Irish-medium Education. In addition, the core policies of other governmental departments must be considered as the Regional Plan evolves and enhanced connections made to key initiatives, such as the Children and Young People's Strategy, Together Building United Communities (TBUC) and the development of community planning processes.

PfY also outlined a set of core principles supporting Youth Work in Education. It is intended that these principles underpin all aspects of youth work supported by DE.

- Participation in youth services is voluntary and should enable young people to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to tackle the issues that are important to them;
- The active participation of young people should be fostered, supported and evidenced across all youth settings;
- Equality and inclusion should be fundamental to planning and implementation and the values of equality, diversity and interdependence should be at the heart of youth work;
- Young people, their families and the wider community should be involved in youth work in a meaningful way, with expectations managed within the resources available;
- Young people should expect high quality services, which follow best practice including the highest standards of child protection;
- Collaborative working between the voluntary, uniformed, faith-based and statutory sectors should play an important part in securing improved outcomes for young people and the continued commitment from the youth workforce, including volunteers;

- The contribution of the volunteer workforce within the youth sector is invaluable and should be acknowledged, support and celebrated;
- Resources should be used to achieve priority outcomes for young people in the most cost effective way, according to best practice principles (public value);
- The needs of the young person should be the key focus at each stage of development; and
- Activities should be engaging, enjoyable and planned to deliver improved outcomes.

Assessment of need

PfY maintains that the strategic planning and resourcing of youth work must address the assessed need for youth work interventions. Effective assessment of need is particularly critical; given that DE funded youth work must be set within the context of prioritised age ranges, priority groups and a clear definition of the need for targeted interventions, alongside an element of non-targeted/generic provision that is assessed as needed.

There is a need to develop more robust, systematic use of relevant statistical data at regional level to underpin strategic planning. The RYDP will also require the effective analysis of appropriate qualitative data, available research and stakeholder feedback, to ensure that a consistent understanding of assessed need is developed to underpin the allocation of resources across the region, in support of agreed priorities.

Given the critical nature of this task, a key action, to develop a regional needs assessment framework, will be taken forward in the 2015-2016 Plan.

As an interim measure, the assessment of need processes, currently operating within the ELBs, will be maintained and then built upon as a regional framework is

developed. Each ELB currently displays information, relating to assessment of need and plans at local level, on their individual website.

The development of priority areas for action 2015-2016

At a workshop held for members of the Regional Advisory Group (RAG) on 3rd October 2014, the following priority areas were highlighted as critical early actions.

- The development of a new funding scheme, establishing clear links between regional and local assessment of need and delivery requirements
- A clear definition of the terms generalist and targeted provision
- The development of a scoping paper regarding a Practice Development Unit (PDU)
- The establishment of the Terms of Reference for the Network for Youth
- The initiation of a pilot programme to take forward a Small Grants Scheme
- The piloting of an Outcomes Framework suitable for all elements of the service
- The development of a framework for a Management Information System (MIS) for the Youth Service, linked to the assessment of need, proportionate monitoring and any new funding scheme
- The design and development of a three year Regional Youth Development Plan for the period 2016-2019.

A planning group, comprising of officers from DE, ELBS and YCNI, was tasked with further considering the feedback from the October workshop and developing a draft Framework document. This was then submitted to the Chair of the Regional Advisory Group and tabled for discussion at a subsequent RAG workshop on 25th November 2014. During that workshop a consensus emerged about the core actions and priorities that should be taken forward for the period 2015-2016.

The attached Action Plan (2014 – 2015) details the agreed actions, set out under the broad framework of the Department's overarching goals, discretely referenced to specific aspects of *PfY*. Some of these actions are intrinsically connected and a further workshop was held on 20th January 2015 to agree the sequencing of the actions and to establish the most appropriate ways in which stakeholders are to be involved in the implementation process.

It must be acknowledged that these priorities are being developed in a period of uncertain financial stability and may need to be revised when future funding has been decided.

Co-ordination, monitoring and reporting

The Interim Framework will, as noted, provide the context for the development of individual action plans/business plans, within the current educational structures. Some of the key actions in the framework document will be taken forward by ELBs and YCNI, as part of their individual plans. It is also proposed that inter-sectoral groupings are established to consider a number of key issues. There will be a need to co-ordinate and manage activity across the entire range of actions, within the respective current and future governance arrangements of the statutory organisations.

**ACTION PLAN FOR
REGIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
2015-2016**

INTRODUCTION - Summary of Key Actions

Raising Standards for All

- Local Engagement
- Assessment of Need
- Framework of Outcomes
- Quality Assurance
- Management Information System (MIS)
- Regional Youth Development Plan 2016 – 2019
- Annual Report

Closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access and Equality

- Non Targeted/Generic Youth Provision

Developing the Education Workforce

- Practice Development Unit

Improving the Learning environment

- Small Grants Programme
- Network for Youth
- Residential and Outdoor Education

Transforming the Governance and Management of Education

- Funding Distribution Mechanism
- Annual Report

Raising Standards					
Area for Action	Outputs	Outcomes	Measurement/ Target	Priorities for Youth Reference	Progress
Local Engagement	Local Advisory Group established with agreed Terms of Reference	Effective local engagement	First Local Advisory group meeting held October 2015	Pfy 4.6.2	
Assessment of Need	A Framework for Regional Assessment of Need developed by ELBs/YCNI	Regional Composite Assessment of Need	Initial Assessment of Need by ELBs/YCNI published by September 2015	PfY 4.6.1	
Framework of Outcomes	Framework of expected outcomes for all types of provision piloted	Generic youth work outcomes agreed	Pilot completed by March 2016	PfY 4.6.4	
Quality Assurance	An agreed Quality Assurance System developed	Quality Assurance System available for implementation	Quality Assurance System developed by March 2016	PfY 4.6.10	
Management Information System (MIS)	A MIS system developed	The elements of a future MIS identified for implementation	Scoping exercise for MIS completed by March 2016	PfY 4.6.5	
Regional Youth Development Plan 2016 - 2019	RYDP developed by ELBs/YCNI	An effective and co-ordinated regional youth service	RYDP agreed by November 2015	Pfy 4.6.2	
Annual Report	Annual report format agreed	High level summary on investment, activities and outcomes achieved	First Annual Report submitted by June 2016	Pfy 4.6.6	

Closing the Gap					
Area for Action	Outputs	Outcomes	Measurement/ Target	Priorities for Youth Reference	Progress
Non Targeted/Generic Youth Provision	Funding made available within given priorities and available resources	Non targeted/generic youth provision supported	Level of provision provided with agreed associated funding by March 2016	PfY 4.8.3	

Developing the Education Workforce					
Area for Action	Outputs	Outcomes	Measurement/ Target	Priorities for Youth Reference	Progress
Practice Development Unit (PDU)	Paper prepared on the Terms of Reference for the PDU	Functions of the PDU articulated and implementation programme agreed	Paper presented to the RAG by November 2015 PDU prepared for establishment on April 2016	PfY 4.13.1	

Improving the Learning Environment					
Area for Action	Outputs	Outcomes	Measurement/ Target	Priorities for Youth Reference	Progress
Small Grants Programme	Small Grants Programme developed and implemented	Young people engaged in decisions regarding the allocation of resources	Programme developed by June 2015 and launched by September 2015	PfY 4.20.5	
Network for Youth	Network for Youth model developed	Participation strengthened at all levels of the service	Agreed model developed by December 2015 and implemented by April 2016	PfY 4.20.3	
Residential and Outdoor Education	Review of Residential and Outdoor Education by ELBs/YCNI	More effective use of Residential and Outdoor Education resources	Review completed by September 2015 Review recommendations implemented by March 2016	PfY 4.20.1	

Transforming the Governance and Management of Education					
Area	Outputs	Outcomes	Measurement/ Target	Priorities for Youth Reference	Progress
Funding Distribution Mechanism	New Funding Scheme developed	Mechanism to target resources more effectively	Draft Funding Scheme agreed by December 2015	PFY 4.24.1	

