

## Regional Advisory Group

Notes of Meeting held on 16 December, 2021 via Microsoft Teams

<b>Date and Venue</b>	16 December, 2021 at 2pm via Microsoft Teams
<b>Present</b>	Mikhaila Woods (Mencap) Gavin Melly (BUD Club) Matthew Taylor (Pure Mental) Paul Brown (Knock Presbyterian Church) John Lynch (Longtower) Alexey Janes (Ulster Wildlife) Lee Cullen (Cara Friend) Ali Talbot (Headliners) Annette Byrne (Scout Foundation NI) Simon Henry (Church of Ireland Youth Department) Gareth Doherty (Headliners) Lisa Keys (Boys' Brigade) Adele Brown (Dept of Justice) Orlaith Mhic Leannáin (Fóram na nÓg) Liam McCusker (Holywood Family Trust) Mandy Jones TEO
<b>In Attendance</b>	Arlene Kee (Education Authority) Michael Hogg (Education Authority) Lynsey Branniff (Education Authority) Paul Deighan (Education Authority) Paul Brush (Youth Work Policy Team DE) Andrew Bell (Youth Work Policy Team DE) Mary Cunningham (National Youth Council Ireland)

### Meeting Notes

<b>1.</b>	<b><u>Welcome</u></b> Arlene Kee welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the main agenda items. Members confirmed their final agreement with the TOR for the group.
<b>2.</b>	<b><u>Update from DE &amp; EA</u></b> Andrew Bell provided an update from the Department. The main items covered included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The release of phase 2 of the Outdoor Centre Covid Relief Fund in early 2022</li><li>• Information relating to the ICT support scheme. This is currently awaiting business case approval and will be open to registered youth organisations delivering targeted youth work. There will be a March 2022 deadline for expenditure and the scheme will be administered by the Education Authority.</li><li>• A review of the funding scheme will be launched in early 2022 to ensure that it is providing resources effectively to meet the assessed needs of children and young people.</li><li>• The policy review has been further delayed; the Department continues to be committed to this process but currently there is no firm timeline for action.</li></ul>

- Information relating to the SEUPB Peace Plus funding streams. This includes two streams to be administered by DE and expected to be launched by SEUPB in Autumn 2022:
  - Youth Linking Together €10m
  - Youth Mental Health & Wellbeing €25m
- The submission relating to the Youth Council is currently with the Minister.
- Information relating to the outworking of the 'Fair Start' Report. There are budget proposals with Departments, and these are out for consultation. In terms of Youth Services, the Horizons Programme will be launched in this financial year.
- Work is currently being explored as to how to mitigate the loss of the Erasmus Programme for Youth that supports International Educational Visits.

The Department also raised the issue that there are currently huge expectations on schools and indicated that they were exploring many options to support the continuity of learning. One of these options was to establish what additionally could be provided by the Youth Service in the new year.

Arlene Kee then provided information about the Independent Review of the Education Authority which will be taking place over the next 4-6 months. It would be likely that there would be contact from the review team with the Regional Advisory Group as part of that process.

#### **Noted Responses**

1. It was agreed that any further options would be shared with other departments, especially DOJ due to the potential impact it could have on TPP focused work.
2. The Local Services Voluntary Sector Providers were keen to ensure that the profile and integrity of community-based services was raised and protected.
3. Several members offered to meet the review team and Education Authority reps agreed to set up a meeting with those members prior to meeting the review team.

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#### **Supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People (Pure Mental Input)**

Matthew Taylor provided a presentation (available on the Teams Site) in relation to the work currently being undertaken by the organisation. Feedback from members was extremely positive.

#### **Noted Responses**

3. 1. Members agreed, where possible to support the work through linking Pure Mental with other like-minded services.
2. The model developed of peer led interventions and whole organisation approaches were identified as examples of best practice.
3. Recognised for the approach to staff self-care
4. Members offered support for funding bids moving forward.
5. Members noted the importance of providing feedback to young people after their views were sought on issues – Lundy's model of participation.

4.	<p><b><u>North South Practice Hub (National Youth Council of Ireland Input)</u></b></p> <p>Mary Cunningham presented a paper to members (available on Team site). This was received positively and the subsequent discussion identified that the review of funding of services in Ireland was currently underway and how it was to be informed by the work undertaken by the Education Authority Youth Service and the funding scheme here.</p> <p><b><u>Noted Responses</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cross border collaboration was identified as essential in providing effective youth services especially to vulnerable young people. Examples were provided and Lee Cullen committed to sharing a document Cara Friend had developed.</li> </ol>
5.	<p><b><u>Youth Service Engagement with Young People who have Additional Needs (Mencap and Liberty Consortium Input)</u></b></p> <p>Gavin Melly and Mikhaila Woods gave a presentation on their experiences of working with young people with additional needs and the challenges that raises to the sector. This included matters such as how assessed need on this topic could be refined, key considerations that providers need to be aware of and recommendations for future awareness and actions (presentation available on the Teams site).</p> <p><b><u>Noted Responses</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Members acknowledged the challenges faced with this and other specialist services. Further discussion also identified that awareness raising, and training should focus on the areas of 'uncomfortable conversations' to ensure effective provision could be developed.</li> <li>2. The work being developed through Regional Development funding by Mencap will be shared with members when complete.</li> </ol>
6.	<p><b><u>Regional Youth Development Plan (Update and Future Development)</u></b></p> <p>Members were requested to review the draft plan for 2022/23 and provide feedback directly to Rory McLaughlin via email before the end of January, 2022. A task and finish group is to be established to complete the necessary work which would include reviewing potential funding opportunities via the regional stream and to act as a final review team for the RYDP.</p> <p><b><u>Noted Responses</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Several members put themselves forward for inclusion in the subgroup (Orlaith Mhic Leannáin, Lisa Keys, John Lynch, Lee Cullen and Mikhaila Woods).</li> </ol>
7.	<p><b><u>Agenda items for future meetings</u></b></p> <p>March, 2022 – Digital Divide</p> <p>June, 2022 – Young People and the Environment (Ulster Wildlife)</p>

8.

**Any Other Business**

Members were informed that the Terms of Reference for the Regional Advisory Group would now be published on the website.