

Regional Advisory Group

Agreed Notes of Meeting held on 30 March 2022 in Hammer Youth Centre

Date and Venue	30 March 10.00am Hammer Youth Centre
Present	Lisa Keys (Boys' Brigade) Lee Cullen (Cara Friend) Mandy Jones (TEO) Gordon McCalmont (PSNI) Alexey Janes (Ulster Wildlife) Gavin Melly (Bud Club) John Lynch (Longtower) Paul Brown (Knock Presbyterian Church) Orlaith Mhic Leannáin (Fóram na nÓg) Liam McCusker (Holywood Family Trust) Simon Henry (COI)
In Attendance	Arlene Kee (Education Authority) Michael Hogg (Education Authority) Paul Deighan (Education Authority) Siobain Byrne (Education Authority) Andrew Bell (Youth Work Policy Team DE) Rosie Drysdale (Youth Work Policy Team DE) Joe Hawkins (National Youth Council Ireland) Joanne Jones (ETI)
Apologies	Paul Brush (DE) Annette Byrne Sylvia Gordon Mikhaila Woods Anita Waite

Meeting Notes

1.	<u>Welcome and apologies</u> Arlene Kee welcomed everyone to the meeting. As this was the first face to face meeting members were asked to introduce themselves. Arlene Kee also welcomed and introduced Joanne Jones from ETI to members. Apologies were noted (above) and as a result of the representative from the Scouts being unwell the agenda had to be altered. The main agenda items were then outlined. Members were reminded they can upload documents to the RAG Teams site.
2.	<u>Notes of previous meeting</u> Members agreed the notes of the previous meeting held on 16 December 2021 to be accurate. Members agreed that the notes can now be published on the RAG page on the EA funding website.
3.	<u>Update from DE & EA</u>

Andrew Bell provided an update from the Department. The main items covered included:

- COVID funding schemes are completed
- Outdoor Education COVID relief funding completed
- ICT capacity building fund– due to the funding available targeted provision was prioritised
- Andrew Bell acknowledged the work of both the Education Authority and other youth organisations in the turnaround of the funding from application to release of the funding
- ETI will be reviewing the new Funding Scheme, looking at the impact on the needs of children and young people.
- The Youth Policy review – unable to progress as there are currently some staff vacancies and staff will be appointed soon. Review will begin when staff in place
- The decision on the Youth Council will be delayed due to the upcoming elections
- Independent Review of Education which began in October 21. The review will take minimum 18 months and is expected to end April 2023 however the Minister can extend the review by 6 months. Andrew Bell and Arlene Kee have presented to the panel on the Youth Service.

Arlene Kee then gave updates on:

- Funding: youth service has given out additional funding compared to any other year. This ranges from increased money from Tackling Paramilitarism Programme to Summer funding. Arlene Kee acknowledged the representative bodies from DE, DoJ and TEO and thanked them for their support.
- Landscape review of the EA: to be completed as of 31 March 2022. The summative report will be sent to Baker, Tilly, Moore which will outline key issues around the effectiveness and efficiency of the EA. Arlene Kee informed members that the work of the Youth Service, both statutory and voluntary, was written up as an exemplar of good practice.
- Upcoming period of potential instability. The Youth Service will be working closely with colleagues in the PSNI in terms of community safety. Work will be focused on refugees coming into the country and any negative messaging or impact that would have and the upcoming Easter celebrations and planning for the summer.
- TBUC camp programme – Mandy Jones from TEO informed members that there will be approx. 122 groups. Applications are down on previous years which may be due to staff / volunteer shortages. This will start soon, budget permitting.
- Gordon McCalmont noted the uncertainties that can be faced during the periods of potential instability however there are strong relationships and contingencies in place
- Paul Deighan noted that Mid Ulster had a low uptake on TBUC applications which will need to be looked into and solutions to be put in place.

Member responses noted:

John Lynch requested that the potential for criminal gangs to exploit young people during the period of instability was kept high on the agenda particularly during election season. The need to ensure children and young people are not being exploited for political gain.

Update from North South Practice Hub including representation on the Advisory Board (papers provided)

Arlene Kee directed members to the invitation to join the Advisory Group which was included in the issued papers. Members who are interested in joining the Advisory Group were asked to speak with either Joe Hawkins or Arlene Kee after the RAG meeting.

Joe Hawkins then provided an update on the strategic work of the hub:

- First event held on 10 March 2022 around the contribution of play and play work for youth work outcomes for under 10s:
 - 18 attendees
 - Playboard NI input looked at where play work and youth work overlap
 - Arlene Kee and Paul Deighan gave input on how the Youth Service is embedding play work methodology
 - As a result of the meeting Playboard had a number of organisations contact them from across the island.
- The other piece of work being looked at is conversations around connecting organisations who are working with LGBTQI young people to look at the current and emerging needs within the LGBTQI community and connecting with the wider youth service and sharing practice to enhance the quality of the service
- Bystander intervention – Siobain Byrne and Arlene Kee have been inputting to this work. This is a major theme across the island. Looking at pooling a resource together to support worker engaging with older young people in the context of gender-based violence, harassment, and consent.
- The Advisory Group is not a major commitment meeting twice per year and an annual meeting. This is how we can connect RAG to the North South Advisory Group.

4.

Arlene Kee added that the Executive Office is also looking at Bystander Intervention and EA would like all youth workers to have access to the training and a Key Stage 3 or 4 module written for young people.

The North South Hub is to provide support to organisations. This is part of the Regional Assessment of Need which will be taken forward by Paul Deighan and Rory McLaughlin and all of the information put forward will go towards our key priorities for next year.

Going forward there will be an update at each RAG meeting.
Members questions:

Lisa Keys asked if the membership of the North South reference group can be extended out or limited to RAG members. Arlene Kee confirmed that following high level consultation it was agreed that this was for RAG members only.

5.

Final RYDP Action Plan 22-23 (for noting)

Arlene Kee thanked members for their comments. Currently still in draft as final tidying to be completed. There will be lots of engagement this year to establish the Regional Assessment of Need to take forward for the next three years (2023-2026).

6.

RAG/LAG Conference Report

- Arlene Kee noted that the report was not available prior to the meeting due to the short turnaround time between the Conference and the RAG meeting. A draft copy was issued to members.
- Paul Deighan shared the Conference video with members and gave an overview of the report.
- Arlene Kee thanked all involved on the day for their attendance and contributions.

Summary of recommendations within the report:

1. More informal learning
2. Consultation fatigue – young people should be driving the narrative
3. Reforming the Education system
4. LGBT and sexual health
5. Lived experiences
6. Societal and environmental concerns
7. Rural children and young people
8. Digital divide

The report will now go to DE for review and the Independent Review panel and the EA Board.

Arlene Kee opened the floor to members. Noted responses:

Alexy Janes welcomed the report and the inclusion of sustainability goals. Lee Cullen attended the Conference and stated both the Conference and report were fantastic. It was refreshing to see young people give their feedback so honestly. Reflecting on the delivery of practice online through the pandemic we need to look at how our youth workers may not be as competent as our European counterparts.

Mandy Jones asked if the report can be shared, Arlene Kee asked that members not share at this time as it is still in draft form. The final report will be issued to members and it can then be shared.

John Lynch noted the outstanding work of the young people at the Conference.

MIS Pilot scheme and strategy

Paul Deighan gave a presentation on the MIS and how this will shape around the new Funding Scheme.

Priorities for Youth 4.6.5 asked that EA design an appropriate MIS for all DE supported youth work.

In 2016 a cross sectional group came together to scope the work to design an effective MIS.

There was engagement with Deloitte who recognised this needed to be a bespoke system.

- Phase 1 – pilot Derry / Londonderry identified as the pilot area and EA engaged with 9 groups in the area
- Phase 2 – current stage extended pilot with 52 groups across the country who are adopting and developing the system.
- Phase 3 – 2023 rollout proposed to all

MIS platform will be more efficient for statutory and voluntary reporting together. This will lead to a more dynamic needs assessment and with reporting centrally in real time. RAG will be kept updated on the progress at the appropriate times.

7.

John Lynch then discussed the system itself. The key objectives were to have a system that made life easier around reporting and bureaucracy.

Core Plus worked with Youth Service in England. Their system allowed the flexibility to capture all youth provision for an individual. The system allows direct interaction with parents. There is a risk management process around the system ensuring training is delivered to all levels of IT literacy. The vision is to rollout to the 3 locality hubs and also in centre. By 2023 ultimately there will be one Target Monitor.

Paul Deighan reiterated that recording is proportionate to each organisation.

Members responses:

Orliath stated that the system sounds amazing and that in terms of front of house it will get rid of the papers that are currently used.

John Lynch confirmed the front of house app allows the voice of children and young people to be heard.

Lee Cullen asked that organisations outside current EA funding model were consulted around the sharing of confidential information particularly Women's Aid and LGBTQI+ organisations.

Members who would like more information can speak with John Lynch.

8.

Youth Service Engagement with Young People who experience the digital divide

Item replaced with Registration and Non-targeted funding

Paul Deighan gave a presentation around new guidance to be released tomorrow.

This information will be available to all and the presentation will be uploaded to the RAG Teams site. Forum Na Nog can translate to Irish language as document will be editable.

Generic non targeted funding is for voluntary youth programmes delivered solely by volunteers, allocated on an annual basis.

As of 1 April 2022, all organisations will be asked to re-register. Organisations will be asked to complete and upload their report. Once this is uploaded organisations will move to their funding applications for 2022-2023.

This will be a quicker process for EA and all strands of funding will be included.

Two routes for registration – new group not registered or existing group already registered updating their registration. There is a slight change to the information required to register with regards to key planning information:

- email contact for one Committee member
- membership numbers and volunteers and paid staff
- safeguarding information

Verification visits will now recommence.

Timeline:

1 April – 30 April update registration and apply for generic non-targeted.

3 May – 20 May assessment (Governance checks)

27 May – aim to release notification of award

10 June – acceptance of Letter of Offer payment issued by 30 June.

Delays to payment issue will only occur if acceptance of offer is late or if organisations do not meet compliance.

Members responses noted:

Lisa Keys (BB) stated this was very useful and staff can talk groups through the process and groups can call them for guidance. Deadlines can be reinforced with groups. Hours are also much clearer.

Orlaith Mhic Leannáin – some groups have generic non targeted and some groups on still within the Irish Medium scheme, can a blank expenditure be used to log expenditure. Paul Deighan confirmed that all groups in receipt of Irish Medium will report in a separate reporting process and will now register as a new group and proceed to make a new funding application.

Arlene Kee stated that Funding and Assurance Officers and those who carry out moderations are always looking for ways to improve the system and adapting feedback to make the system better.

Paul Deighan stated that there has been a review of the number of moderations being carried out and moderations will be condensed based on feedback.

John Lynch stated that it is important that the additional data now required is built into the MIS, this will pull out the info and organisations will know that they have report to complete.

Joanne Jones asked about the Safeguarding Policy and how this is submitted. Paul Deighan confirmed that groups submit the policy. If a new group registers the policy is submitted as part of registration and verification. If a group is re-registering and their policy has changed, they will need to re-submit the new policy. Arlene Kee stated that EA now have a nominated Officer re safeguarding. New groups will receive an onsite visit. Groups will not receive a formal Letter of Offer until verification has taken place.

The presentation will be published on the Teams site and the Funding website. Gavin Melly acknowledged the work of the EA around making the process so much easier.

Mandy Jones asked if this was purely online, Paul Deighan confirmed a digital approach first and a paper version will be available. Mandy Jones noted the advantages to registering, applying for TBUC funding and discounted rates on Outdoor Learning Centres.

Sectoral Conference October 2022 – Proposal

9.

Arlene Kee informed members that a Sector Conference was being proposed at the request of the voluntary sector to take place in October 2022. There are no parameters and EA will fund and help to support the Conference.

Members were asked to nominate themselves if they would like to be part of the working group.

Ideas for themes were welcomed.

Nikki will send an email after Easter to remind members that they can nominate themselves for the working group. It is anticipated there will be a requirement for a minimum of 3 meetings which EA will arrange. Date for Conference will be prior to Halloween.

Andrew Bell added that this will be a cross sectoral Conference to bring statutory and voluntary together.

Any other notified business

10.

None

Agreement to publish:

- Notes of the meeting 16 December
- RYDP Action Plan 22-23
- Final report of RAG / LAG Conference report when Independent Review panel have agreed
- RAG / LAG event report
- Updated RYDP action plan 21-22
- MIS powerpoint – not to be published
- Terms of Reference

June meeting agenda items:

- John Lynch: the role of youth service working with vulnerable children and young people and how do we define this role. To include the role

of youth service in gender-based violence. Members agreed to have this as a substantive item at the June meeting.

- Alexey Jane suggested Young People and the Environment (Ulster Wildlife) as an item for the September meeting.

Summary of direction of travel for this year:

- Engagement to be clear about our Regional Assessment of Need
- By November 22 we want to know what funding opportunities we are advertising for the next 3 years
- September meeting will provide a sense of direction of where we are going
- Engagement between April – June for Regional Assessment of Need 2023-2026
- SHARED Event on volunteering

Future dates for diary

RAG/LAG Conference

- 4 March 2023

Future dates for RAG Meetings:

- 28 June 2022 – venue confirmed as Forum Na Nog at 10.00am
- 20 September 2022
- 6 December 2022
- 21 March 2023

Arlene Kee thanked members for their attendance and support and the meeting was brought to a close at 12.15pm.

11.