

Regional Advisory Group

Notes of Meeting

Date and Venue	28 June 2022 at 10.00am Boys' Brigade HQ
Present	Lisa Keys (Boys' Brigade) Lee Cullen (Cara Friend) Alexey Janes (Ulster Wildlife) Gavin Melly (Playtrail Bud Club) John Lynch (YWA) Paul Brown (Knock Presbyterian Church) Orlaith Mhic Leannáin (Fóram na nÓg) Liam McCusker (Holywood Family Trust) Drew Launchbury (SFNI) Claire Hazeldene (TPP) Sylvia Gordon (Corrymeela) Gavin King (TEO: TBUC)
In Attendance	Arlene Kee (Education Authority) Paul Deighan (Education Authority) Lynsey Branniff (Education Authority) Rory McLaughlin (Education Authority) Andrew Bell (Youth Work Policy Team DE) Rosie Drysdale (Youth Work Policy Team DE) Joe Hawkins (National Youth Council Ireland)
Apologies	Mandy Jones (TEO) Mikhaila Woods (Mencap) Anita Waite (Dept for Communities) Gordon McCalmont (PSNI) Joanne Jones (ETI) Simon Henry (COI)

Meeting Notes

1.	<u>Welcome and apologies</u> Arlene Kee welcomed members to the Boys' Brigade HQ in Culcavy. Members introduced themselves for the benefit of the new representative Drew Launchbury from the Scout Foundation NI. John Lynch informed members of his new role as CEO of Youth Work Alliance. Members were asked if there were any objections to John remaining on the RAG. No objections were raised. Arlene Kee gave a brief overview of the purpose of the RAG for new attendees.
2.	<u>Notes of previous meeting</u> Members agreed the notes of the previous meeting held on 30 March 2022 to be accurate. Members agreed that the notes can now be published on the RAG page on the EA funding website. Arlene Kee referred to the item on the previous agenda relating to the MIS and how the Voluntary Sector worked with Deloitte and how the EA have also recently worked with Deloitte around a new MIS. Paul Deighan to facilitate a

meeting with EA staff involved in digital transformation to link the two projects. Rory McLaughlin and John Lynch to attend this meeting.

No matters arising.

Update from DE & EA

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

- Review of the new Funding Scheme. ETI have started background preparation and the review will begin in September. The Terms of Reference will be available.
- Peace Plus Programme: Learning Together €10m available, expected to be fully operational by September 2023. Possibility of pre-application workshops. Once the call is issued in October there will be formal application workshops.
- Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing expected call early 2023. €25m available. Workshops will be available in advance.
- Youth Council: The Minister's decision is still pending. May be after new Ministers are appointed.
- DE seeking to recruit a qualified youth worker for 18 months with possible extension to join Youth work Policy Team. Members were asked if they know anyone who may be interested to inform them of the vacancy.

Noted responses:

Joe Hawkins asked when the programmes would be on the ground. Andrew Bell stated expected date of September 2023 one year after the call. Arlene Kee welcomed conversations around collaboration.

Update from North South Practice Hub

Joe Hawkins gave an update on the North South Practice Hub. The first meeting of the Advisory Group has taken place, there will be two further meetings this year. Lee Cullen has facilitated a meeting of LGBTQ+ organisations N/S to look at sharing of practice N/S.

Rory McLaughlin and Mary McGrath attended from EA and lots of themes and opportunities were identified.

Play work session in March 2022, shared learning from the Youth at Play Programme. Playboard have seen interest from organisations in the South and will be training one of the organisations COVE Youth Services.

Joe Hawkins met with Dublin Youth Service Board, looking at engaging with the organisations and will be involved in the LGBTQ+ N/S work.

The Dept of Justice in the south will be exploring funding for work with 8-10-year olds as they are seeing an increase in violence among younger children after lockdown. Young people insulting each other on social media and arranging stand offs including bringing weapons and hospitalisations.

Joe has been working with Rodney Green the EA International youth work officer on the Go Create Programme.

3.

4.

Arlene Kee informed members about the Horizons Programme (part of Fair Start) taking 315 young people to 5 camps across the island.
Orlaith Mhic Leannáin has been working with the statutory body for Irish language organisations, Fóram na nÓg are involved in the wider planning. Joe and Orlaith to link for a meeting to discuss.

Proposals for Sectoral Conference October 2022

Working group has met and planning has begun.
John Lynch and Joe Hawkins are exploring the theme of redefining youth work in the space of vulnerability, protecting the integrity of youth work and understanding the role of youth work working in a multi-disciplinary context. Looking at open and honest conversations and how sometimes it is ok to say no when it is not youth work. Ian Wright – Power of One, pays attention to the ethos of youth work in his work. Three elements: Prevention, Intervention and Protection and where does youth work sit within these 3 elements and what is our role within it.

Gavin Melly looking at the theme of youth work in ASD. There has been a 62% increase in the last 5 years of children diagnosed 1:21 children in NI. What does this mean for the youth sector and looking at the complexity of need, looking at how the need is changing the landscape of youth work. To become more proactive in our approach: supporting staff support.

Speakers -seminar on autism held in Derry had a speaker from Victoria University in Melbourne who is specialised within this area. Also looking at young people being involved.

5.

Joe Hawkins informed members about the significant issue in South and will share the link.

Looking at this through the lens of – What, So What, and Now What. The challenge will be to all of us what do we do now.

Arlene Kee framed the Conference:

Opening speaker – talking about youth work coming out of the pandemic
Underlying theme of poverty which cannot be ignored. Draft programme will be sent out.

Connectivity will be another theme. Speaker from organisation such as Google.

Noted responses:

Gavin King stated that the theme matches with CRC with the theme Change starts with us. Good relations week runs until 25 September with a week either side with events on the periphery.

Alexey Janes stated that young people with autism are very vocal and involved with the theme of natural world. Link between bio and euro diversity.

Date confirmed as 8 October 2022.

Lisa Keys discussed supporting volunteers who have ASD for future item. John Lynch to link with Lisa Keys.

Members agreed to proceed with this draft outline. Working Group will send out the draft programme for comment.

Gavin and Melly also suggested looking at the ASD in relation to LGBTQ+

Digital Poverty

Drew Launchbury gave a presentation on Scouting and the Digital Poverty Divide.

Drew started with an activity and members were divided into groups. Groups were provided with a bag of resources and an envelope. Each group provided with an envelope was given 5 minutes to complete the task. One group was given an envelope after the task had begun.

The aim of the task was to build the most imaginative and highest tower, without any matching colours being used. The purpose of this task was to demonstrate how having only some or part of the exercise affects how we perform.

Drew then showed the presentation which will be available online for members.

There are many different components to the digital divide:

- Broadband and Wi-Fi coverage
- Digital skills
- Access to equipment
- Costs involved in paying for the equipment

The digital divide is as much a social problem as it is about access.

Drew provided an overview of broadband and connectivity across the province. Issues around connectivity can include such things as hindrance due to granite walls as in the case of one group.

6.

Drew discussed the challenges of moving from face to face work to online work during the pandemic.

Drew presented 3 case studies and the various issues faced to moving Scouting online.

Definite positives came out of the online work including new ways to teach young people activities and innovation however the cost of living crisis will see the divide widen.

Arlene Kee thanked Drew for the presentation and asked RAG members to think about the *So what?* What does this mean for regional youth services, what do we do to address this issue.

Noted responses:

Lisa Keys noted that the cost of living crisis will impact the digital divide.

Rory McLaughlin noted that of connectivity is the issue especially in rural then unfortunately that cannot be addressed by members.

Paul Deighan asked how do we support young people to be connected for example LGBTQI+ young people who rely on being connected. Lee Cullen agreed that online was a safe space for LGBTQI+ young people. Young people could express themselves openly online. The question was asked whether youth workers should look at the amount of media they consume. We need to look at where young people are at online. Arlene Kee stated that this is not just a youth work issue, PSNI, TPP etc

Andrew Bell referred to the RAoN and considering the priority needs and the cost of living. Andrew encouraged members to raise this matter with the Minister. Feedback whether young people have access to devices and

upskilling volunteers and youth workers. If Ministers get strong messages, they can affect change.

Sylvia Gordon useful to know that some young people do not have access, the assumption was made that they did.

Lisa Keys stressed the importance of reaching those young people who cannot get online to ensure they can still attend provision.

Liam McCusker noted that post pandemic young people are wanting to be with each other. Suggested specifications around digital resilience and also engagement with parents.

Lee Cullen need to reinforce that this does not replace youth work, a new approach.

Joe Hawkins workforce development stage 2 around digital resilience allows staff to engage with young people.

Claire Hazeldene this crosses infra structure, there is a wider piece too.

John Lynch talked about the sharing of knowledge and the learning that can be taken from Covid. The reality now is how do we wean young people off social media. YWA is in the process of creating a training programme in OCN Level 2 and 3 to be rolled out.

Alexey Janes noted the uses of digital approach to social action, important to promote e.g. TBUC role.

Arlene informed members that we will come back with suggestions on how to take this forward and encouraged members with any ideas to contact EA.

Bystander capacity building and training programme for staff and young people

7.

Joe Hawkins spoke to members about Bystander Intervention Programme, Prof. Louise Crawley developed the Bystander Intervention Programme for University College Cork through a piece of work by the University of Leicester. Bystander is to do with the inhibiting effects of being part of a group and you see something that makes you feel off. As a bystander you are standing by when you see something that makes you uncomfortable.

N/S bystander working group includes Narene Skeffington and Mary McGrath from EA, YMCA and Spun out Ireland. The working group has held its first meeting.

Joe Hawkins gave an overview of what the bystander programme will entail over the five or six sessions and building an understanding of bystander intervention.

Arlene Kee added that the vision is for every youth worker in both North and South of Ireland to have bystander intervention built into their practice.

Timeline for the working group: meetings over summer to put together the skeleton of the programme and then it will be piloted with young people. By early Autumn hopefully be in a position to promote it.

Liam McCusker asked about delivery of the training. Joe state that the focus would be on gender-based violence.

Lee Cullen to meet with Joe Hawkins around Cara Friend violence programme.

8.

Any Notified Business

SHARED Event around Faith Based Youth Work on 28 September in Stormont Hotel

Dates for Diary

RAG Meetings:

20 September – venue agreed as Playtrail Derry to be hosted by Gavin Melly at 11.00am. Agenda item to be presented by Alexey Janes on the environment.

Ad hoc meeting Broughshane 6 October regarding funding opportunity.

9.

6 December Vulnerable children and young people – Gordon McCalmont and John Lynch.

To be uploaded:

Notes of previous meeting

Presentation

Conference

Stakeholder engagement events

AOB

Senior EA Officers are working towards RAoN 2023-2026

There is a view that there is either statutory delivery or voluntary delivery. Last year EA were challenged by MLAs in this view. A programme was piloted on Belfast working collaboratively. In NW Derry and Strabane big emphasis on working collaboratively in partnership with EA. This is a key theme. The other theme is volunteering.

EA feel that these 2 key themes a model of statutory and voluntary youth sector delivery that is a partnership approach is different from working in collaboration. A partnership approach means together. We do not want to define what that is so we are looking for people who would like to explore this.

We also want to also invest heavily in volunteers and understand them. And have a strategy.

10.

Michael Hogg is leading on the Model of youth sector delivery – voluntary and statutory

Paul Deighan is leading on the Volunteer Strategy

Michael Hogg – working group: John Lynch; Sylvia Gordon; Liam McCusker; Lee Cullen; Andrew Bell and Orliath Mhic Leannáin.

Paul Deighan – Orliath Mhic Leannáin ; Lee Cullen; Rosie Drysdale; Lisa Keys; Gavin Melly and Paul Brown.

Lynsey Branniff – Youth Work in Rural settings: Alexey Janes; Lee Cullen; John Lynch and Orliath Mhic Leannáin.

Arlene Kee reminded members to complete the online evaluation.

Joe Hawkins informed members about an upcoming event on Mental Health and he will circulate more information.

Arlene Kee thanked Lisa for the hospitality and the meeting ended at 12.15pm.