RAG/LAG Stakeholder Event Lisburn and Castlereagh

The Emerging Needs of Children and Young People

Monday 3 June 2019

3D Youth Centre, Lisburn

ea Education Authority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides details of the Stakeholder Participation Event that took place on Monday 3rd June 2019 at the 3D Youth Centre in Lisburn. The event was part of the Education Authority (EA) RAG participative processes and was led by the Regional Advisory Group (RAG) and Local Advisory Group (LAG) for Lisburn and Castlereagh.

The event engaged sixty-three key stakeholders from across the statutory and voluntary youth sectors to consider 'the emerging needs of children and young people'. Participants had the opportunity to contribute their views and opinions through discussions in two workshops, to identify the new or emerging issue for young people and how the youth service can best respond to support young people on these issues.

Participants identified that some issues prioritised in the 2016 Regional Assessment of Need remained a priority namely, mental health and exam stress however a number of new key issues came to the fore. This included use of technology including social media and gaming, drugs, alcohol, smoking/vaping and associated addictions, issues with identity, diversity and a sense of belonging, uncertainty about the future in terms of career prospects, lack of political leadership and the voice of young people.

Key recommendations on how the youth service could address these issues were identified, which included support for young people in the form of additional programmes and more outreach work, along with some new areas for consideration; this included creation of 'safe spaces' and 'quiet spaces' for young people, along with working with more of an emphasis on community initiatives and partnerships to support young people in understanding their identity and helping young people develop a sense of belonging.

1	INTRODUCTION

The Lisburn and Castlereagh Local Advisory Group (LAG) facilitated a Stakeholder Engagement Event for the Regional Advisory Group (RAG) on the 'Emerging Needs of Children and Young People' on Monday 3 June 2019 in the 3D Youth Centre in Lisburn. The event was one of a series of events aimed at engaging key stakeholders at a local level on a particular theme/issue identified by the RAG.

Young people from the Lisburn and Castlereagh Youth Council, who are members of the local LAG, planned and organised the event inviting registered youth groups, partner organisations and members of the public to come along and be part of the discussions.

1.1 Aims

- To increase participation of young people and other key stakeholders at a local level to identify key themes and issues in relation to emerging needs and to outline how these could be addressed by youth services.
- To gather the views and opinions of key stakeholders on the identified theme to help inform the development of key themes for the Regional Assessment of Need and Regional Youth Development Plan 2020-2023.

1.2 Objectives

- To host a local event to increase the participation of young people and key stakeholders.
- To engage key stakeholders in a range of group activities and group discussions, to identify new or emerging issues for young people.
- To develop recommendations on how youth services could best support young people to address these issues through the use of mentimetre.
- To produce a report on the event to inform RAG of themes for consideration for the Regional Assessment of Need.

The Stakeholder Engagement Event was led by the Lisburn and Castlereagh LAG which included young people from the Lisburn and Castlereagh Youth Council.

LAG members had the opportunity to input into the overall design and planning of the event however the young people took the lead in terms of creating the programme and content of the evening including workshops, interactive activities, speeches, catering and publicity (appendix i).

The young people from the LAG were supported by youth workers to be co-creators of the programme and to lead on the delivery and facilitation of the event.

Participants were divided into 3 groups to participate in the programme which was divided into two distinct parts; an interactive workshop and a digital Mentimeter workshop.

2.1   Interactive Workshop

An interactive workshop used a range of photographic images and encouraged stakeholders to identify what new or emerging issues they perceived for young people going forward. Each participant chose an image of the perceived issue and discussed this in small groups. Individual responses were recorded along with the top 6 issues agreed by each group (appendix ii).

2.2   Digital Mentimeter

Each participant in their respective groups was encouraged to identify how youth service should respond to the top 6 issues by using the Mentimeter online engagement tool. This tool collated and presented the responses to identify the most popular response on each issue.

3　ATTENDANCE

A total of 63 people attended the Stakeholder Engagement Event in Lisburn from across a range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations (appendix iii). These included, Derriaghy Youth Project, Moneyrea Community Church, Brooklands Youth Centre, Antrim and Newtownabbey LAG, Resurgam Youth Initiatives, Lisburn and Castlereagh Youth Council, Lisburn YMCA, Lisburn Rural Project, Lisburn Area Project, Lisburn and Castlereagh PCSP, Lisburn Linen Centre and Museum, Youth Work Alliance, Damask and Dreamscheme.

There was also representation from RAG members including the EA Director of Children and Young People's Services, EA Head of Local Youth Services a representative from the Department of Education and a Youth Work Alliance representative.

Young people from across the statutory, voluntary and community youth work sectors were in attendance which made up the main constituent body of attendees at 52%.

3.1　Attendance Figures

Attendance Group	Number
Young People	33
Local Advisory Members	8 (6 young people and 2 adults)
Regional Advisory Members	3
Youth Work Staff	16 (10 EA staff and 6 voluntary sector staff)
Other e.g. PCSP,	3

3.2　Satisfaction

100% of participants involved in the Stakeholder Event rated the event very satisfactory or satisfactory.

4 ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

4.1 New or Emerging Issues for Young People

4.1.1 The interactive workshop on new or emerging issues identified the following key issues for young people;

a. Use of technology including social media and gaming,

b. Drugs, alcohol, smoking/vaping and associated addictions including gambling,

c. Identity, diversity and a lack of 'a sense of belonging,'

d. Uncertainty about the future including job prospects and the pressures of exams,

e. Lack of political leadership and

f. The voice of young people.

4.1.2 The top 6 issues identified by young people in the Regional Assessment of Need (2016) were exam stress, boredom, body image, confidence, mental health and relationships. From the responses from each of the groups at the Stakeholder Engagement Event a number of these issues remain a priority for example mental health and exam stress.

4.1.3 Many of the responses demonstrated that young people feel that there is a deficit in terms of not being valued e.g. not having a say, lack of understanding, lack of certainty, lack of political representation.

4.1.4 Along with the collective responses, participants were encouraged to note down from their perspective their own particular issue. These can be found in more detail in appendix iv.

4.2 The Youth Service Response

4.2.1 During the second workshop each group used the Mentimeter technology to identify how best the youth service should respond to these issues (appendix v).

4.2.2 A range of suggestions were put forward as to how the youth service should respond to young people's mental health issues including bullying. Many respondents noted that more support was needed for young people. Some suggestions for the youth service included offering quiet spaces for young people to talk or to access counselling. Other suggestions included more mentoring work, one to one work, youth work programmes including anti-bullying programmes, residential experiences and more outreach programmes.

It was also felt that additional resources were needed for this type of work along with increased work with schools/teachers.

4.2.3 Use of technology including social media and gaming – Participants indicated that young people needed more support in the use of social media and gaming and that the youth service should have an educative role in this area. This could be through awareness raising sessions/programmes, workshops and training or online help from youth workers. It was felt that parents also needed to be educated in this area to raise awareness of social media use and to provide support. Within the feedback it was also suggested that the youth service should consider using social media more e.g. using social media for outreach and as a mechanism to consult with young people but it was clear that this should not be the only method of communication but would compliment the range of methods currently used by youth services to communicate with young people.

4.2.4 Drug and alcohol use, smoking/vaping and associated addictions including gambling – It was felt that the youth service had a key role in terms of supporting young people regarding their drug and alcohol use. This could be in the form of providing greater alternatives for young people along with safe places and weekend youth provision. It was also suggested that more outreach programmes were needed to reach young people and provide the necessary support. It was outlined that the youth service has a role in educating young people about smoking/vaping, raising awareness of the impact on young people's health and providing healthy alternatives. In relation to gambling it was felt that more support was needed for young people in this area and the youth service should have a greater role an educating young people and parents.

4.2.5 Identity, diversity and a lack of 'a sense of belonging' – respondents indicated that many young people need support with their identity and often lack a 'sense of belonging.' This is an area which the youth service should and could respond to. It was suggested that the youth service should provide safe spaces for young people, promote inclusion and embrace difference.   This can be through providing opportunities for young people to mix with other groups, engage in cross community projects, international visits and more inter-community and inter-generational work. There was also a particular emphasis on the youth service working with the community on community initiatives and partnerships.

4.2.6　Uncertainty about the future including job prospects and the pressures of exams – It was felt that the youth service should be supporting young people with their uncertainty about the future. Suggestions were put forward that there should be further opportunities to build skills, participate in programmes/workshops and training along with providing space to talk about jobs/careers or facilitate job fairs as well as providing mentoring and guidance. The youth service should continue to support young people to build life skills and gain greater experiences. It was felt that there should be more collaboration with schools to support young people in terms of after school revision/revision support and help with homework along with educating young people on managing stress.

It was recognised that the youth service already do but could provide additional opportunities for volunteering and apprenticeships to support young people in their career paths and the development of key skills.

4.2.7　Lack of political leadership – Feedback from participants on this issue identified that the lack of political leadership was having an impact on young people but the youth service has a key role in terms of giving a platform to young people and ensuring their voices were heard on key issues. Respondents suggested that this could continue to be facilitated through Youth Council structures and encouraging young people to participate in Civic Forums, Youth Parliament or NI Youth Committee. This issue was closely linked to the next issue on the voice of young people.

4.2.8　The voice of young people – This issue was considered in its broadest sense and across a range of situations. It was felt that the relationships between young people and adults can often be difficult however it was recognised that the youth service has a key role in terms of ensuring that young people's voices are heard and responded to. The youth service should continue to provide opportunities and platforms e.g. forums and youth councils for young people to meet with decision makers, encourage discussion and provide opportunities for open discussion and debate on key issues that affect them.

5 Outcomes

5.1 Recommendations

5.1.1 The Lisburn and Castlereagh Stakeholder Engagement Event confirms that a number of issues identified in the 2016 Youth Service Regional Assessment of Need remain a priority for young people. These issues therefore should be included in the next Regional Assessment of Need (2019). Suggestions as to how youth service should respond to these issues however could be explored further e.g. safe spaces for young people to talk, counselling services along with the development of more targeted work in supporting young people across the service and strengthening work with the formal education sector.

5.1.2 Other issues identified through the Stakeholder Consultation Event are relevant at a local and regional level. Support with social media and the online world is essential for young people to remain safe and consideration should be given as to how best this medium can be used for a range of purposes along with the visibility of the youth service in the online world

5.1.3 Support for young people in relation to drugs, alcohol smoking/vaping and addictions is also important for moving forward. The youth service has a role in providing attractive alternatives for young people along with an educational and supportive role.

5.1.4 Young people need support in terms of helping to form and understand their identity and develop a 'sense of belonging'. Youth services have a key role in helping young people explore their identity in a safe and supportive environment along with creating opportunities to for them to explore and understand difference.

5.1.5 In terms of preparing young people for their journey into adult life and chosen careers, support should continue to be provided to help young people deal with the stresses of exams and assessments along with building the necessary skills for their career pathway. The youth service should consider how it can best support young people in this area through the opportunities available across a range of youth work settings.

5.1.6 Youth services have an extremely important role in terms of giving young people a voice and creating platforms for young people to engage with adults on decisions that affect them. Young people want to be heard, they have valuable

contributions to make and should be supported to be equal partners around the negotiating table. The youth service should consider how the youth participation model can be strengthened within youth services to ensure that young people's voices are heard across a range of platforms and areas of community life.

5.1.7   Across all the issues discussed it is worth noting a number of specific responses for youth services being recommended. The creation of 'quiet spaces' for young people was recommended for supporting young people with mental health issues and this may be something the youth service wishes to consider further. The creation of 'safe spaces' was recommended for supporting young people with drug and alcohol issues or for helping young people explore their personal identity or diversity in a safe environment. Across a number of responses there were also recommendations for more 'outreach' work and working 'with communities' through specific community initiatives or partnerships – looking outward to supporting young people on their identified needs.

5.2   Future Considerations

The key themes identified through the stakeholder event should be considered further by the EA Information and Planning team in preparation for the Regional Assessment of Need.

A focus group may be beneficial to further enquire on the key themes and preferred youth service responses.

The LAG should take account of the recommended youth service responses to identify issues for future area planning purposes and future service delivery.

6   APPENDIX

Index of Appendices: [list of evidence sources available on request]

i   Stakeholder Event Programme

ii   Key issues identified by group

iii   Attendance list

iv   Individual participant responses

v   Mentimeter responses