

MID & EAST ANTRIM

LOCAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2026 - 2029

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Introduction & Background

The Education Authority (EA) Local Youth Development Action Plan for Mid & East Antrim 2026-2029 outlines the key targets to be achieved by the EA Youth Service, based on the Local Assessment of Need for 2026. This is delivered in accordance with the Department of Education (DE) Policy, 'Priorities for Youth.' The plan will be reviewed regularly, and progress will be reported in line with the Regional Youth Development Plan 2026-29 and the framework of the EA's Strategic Plan (2017-2027) and Corporate Business Plan. The resources provided to the Education Authority Youth Service by the Department of Education are deployed in accordance with the local plan to achieve specific, policy led objectives, outputs, and outcomes. Key actions within this Local Area Youth Development Plan are informed by the Local Assessment of Need, Local Statistical Profiles, Regional Assessment of Need and the Regional Youth Development Plan.

The legislative and policy context for the Local Youth Development Plan is referenced within the Regional Youth Development Plan which can be found here.

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework to address any relevant needs identified in the Mid & East Antrim Local Assessment of Needs; the relevant needs are those that fall within delivery of Youth Service i.e. needs that can be alleviated through Youth Work methodologies and that aren't the responsibility of other agencies or service providers.

Vision Statement

The vision for youth service in Mid & East Antrim is a society where the impact of the needs affecting young people are addressed, to enable them to become active participants and make a difference within their communities. Within Mid & East Antrim those needs focus around,

- the impact of rurality on young people's ability to access services, social isolation and availability of services
- community conflict specifically, racism, sectarianism, discrimination based on gender, sexuality and socio-economic background
- vocational training and employability, linked to educational under attainment particularly in neighbourhood renewal areas

This will be achieved through the provision of high quality, accessible youth services relevant to the age, abilities and needs of each young person.

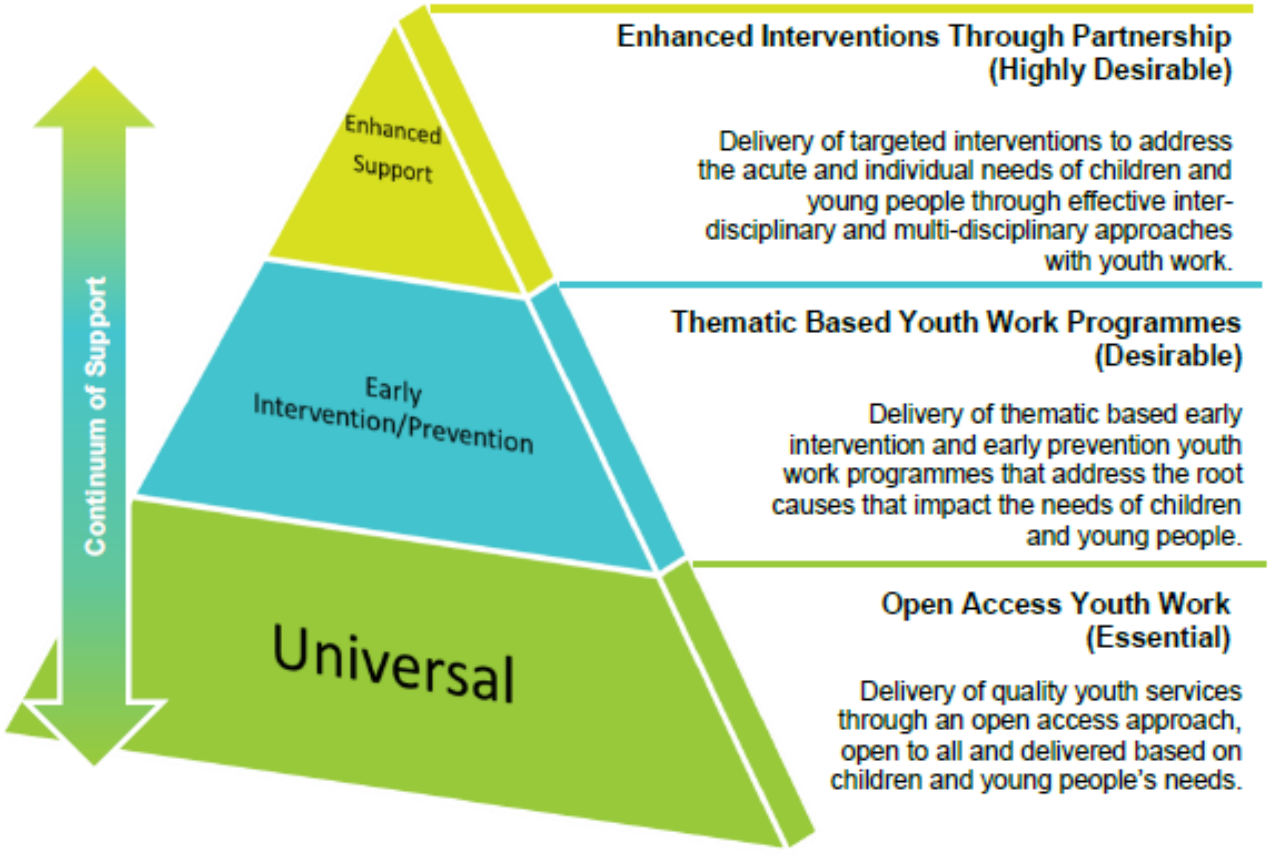
This will enable the delivery of inclusive, responsive, and empowering youth work across Mid & East Antrim that will address the diverse and evolving needs of young people, promote their wellbeing, and support their development into confident, capable, and active citizens, guided by evidence-based assessments and underpinned by statutory obligations and strategic policy.

Youth Service Delivery Model

The Youth Service Delivery Model outlines how youth services will be developed through an adaptation of the Public Health approach that focuses on the provision of Universal, Early Intervention and Prevention and Enhanced Support services (Part 1a). The provision of universal services in the first instance will be prioritised and where resources can be enhanced through collaboration, partnerships or additional funding acquisition further provision can be delivered at the Early Intervention/Prevention and Enhanced Support levels based on the needs of children and young people.

The delivery model recognises that there is overlap between the three tiers. Effective universal work will deliver youth work outcomes to children and young people that mitigate the need for specific or dedicated early intervention or prevention work. This model when accompanied with the stretch goal (Part 1b) provides how this overlap will be achieved. Youth provision will ensure that young people are supported as they transition through the model. As a guide it is expected that Youth Services will take the lead at the Universal tier and act as key partners and actively support young people at the Early Intervention/Prevention and Enhanced Support tiers.

Part 1a – Youth Service Delivery Model



Part 1b - Stretch Goal

STRETCH GOAL		
Universal (Essential Goal)	**Early Intervention & Prevention (Desirable Goal)**	**Enhanced Support (The Stretch Goal)**
What is it?		
Providing **open access youth provision** that provides **safe and welcoming space** for all our children and young people in Mid & East Antrim	Providing ongoing **thematic based group work programmes and projects** to address the **root causes impacting the needs** of children and young people In Mid & East Antrim	Providing **targeted interventions** to address the **acute needs** of children and young people **in partnership** with other agencies to meet the needs of children and young people in Mid & East Antrim.
How will we do it?		
• Providing adequate universal youth provision for children and young people in Mid & East Antrim, ensuring that youth services are funded to prioritise the needs of children and young people who access them • Services are provided at the right times, in the right places based on what children and young people need • Services are informed with the participation of children and young people • Supporting children and young people who need early intervention/prevention to access programmes across the Mid & East Antrim area • Services are equipped with the resources to deliver a quality open access youth work programme of offer	• Providing resources (curriculum, training and funding) to facilitate youth work programmes prioritised against assessed need through formal and informal settings • Supporting families, formal education and communities to support the needs of the young person • Services are informed with the participation of children and young people • Supporting children and young people in Mid & East Antrim who need enhanced support to access programmes or connect with universal support • Services are equipped with the resources to deliver a quality early intervention and prevention programmes/projects • Capacity of Mid & East Antrim staff is	• Providing resources (curriculum, training and funding) to facilitate enhanced professional development • Working with partners and agencies in Mid & East Antrim to deliver bespoke support services at an individual and group level • Supporting young people to attend specialist support services • Reintegrating young people into appropriate youth work opportunities • Reconnecting young people within their family, formal education and community • Supporting children and young people to progress through early intervention and prevention programmes or connect with universal support • Delivery of TPP funded ENGAGE programme

• Capacity of Mid & East Antrim staff is supported to meet the needs of children and young people presented through universal provision	supported to meet the needs through the delivery of early intervention and prevention programmes/projects	
How will we resource it?		
Focused use of the Department of Education Allocated Funding for Youth Work to the Education Authority. Delivered by Local Youth Services	Mixed funding model approach using the Department of Education Funding for Youth Work and other Earmarked Funding aligned to the theme delivered by Local or Regional Youth Services	Focused use of other earmarked funding supporting the delivery of youth work. Delivered by Regional Youth Services.
The Benefits		
Children and Young People will have: • Increased protective factors in their lives • Increased sense of belonging • Experience social and emotional skills development • Increased agency to make informed decisions • Improved social connectedness • Increased sense of power to change the world around them	**Children and Young People will have:** • Improved the resilience, skills and abilities to manage their own wellbeing • Increased agency to make informed decisions • Increased participation in, and focus on, their learning • Improved emotional health and wellbeing • Development of their thinking skills, life skills and work skills	**Children and Young People will have:** • Complex needs of individual children and young people are met • Increased connection between statutory, community and public services • Enhanced youth service capacity to meet the complex needs of children and young people • Facilitated de-escalation support pathways
Benefit Indicators		
BU1 Number of open access youth work sessions provided **BU2** Number of children and young people participating in open access youth provision **BU3** Percentage of young people satisfied with the service **BU4** Number of young people volunteering	**BEI1** Number of group work programmes delivered **BEI2** Number of children and young people participating in youth work programmes **BEI3** Percentage of young people satisfied with the programme **BEI4** Number of young people gaining	**BES1** Number of children and young people engaged in enhanced support youth work programmes **BES2** The numbers of children and young people referred to external agencies **BES3** Number of referrals to early intervention or universal services

within the programme **BU5** Number of young people gaining accreditation **BU6** Status of children and young people's participation on the Engagement Framework **BU7** Number of training programmes provided **BU8** Number of staff participating in training	accreditation **BEI5** Number of young people volunteering within the project **BEI6** Number of referrals to external or enhanced support services or universal services **BEI7** Number of training programmes provided **BEI8** Number of staff participating in training **BEI9** Number of children and young people progressing against one or more of the youth work outcomes	**BES4** Number of children and young people progressing against one or more of the youth work outcomes **BES5** Number of training programmes provided **BES6** Number of staff participating in training

Voice of children and young people and other key stakeholders in Mid & East Antrim

Young people's voices are key to the planning and delivery of effective, inclusive youth services. Young people's voices, along with key stakeholders, informed the Local Assessment of Need for Mid and East Antrim and identified the following themes that this plan seeks to address.

Economic and Environmental Stability

In Mid & East Antrim, many young people face challenges related to their economic and environmental stability. Young people expressed concerns about their future and the need for life skills education, environmental awareness, and community engagement. The impact of poverty on young people's opportunities and future needs addressed. Rural young people's concerns over the environment is a key issue.

To address these challenges, youth services should provide support and opportunities that empower young people and help them develop the skills to attain employment that will enable them to live independently. Youth Services in rural area need to consider the limitations caused by limited public transport, poor internet connections and lack of readily available facilities for delivery of youth work. Encouraging youth-led environmental initiatives including climate education and sustainable practices can provide young people with the knowledge and confidence to behave with responsibility. By involving young people in shaping sustainable solutions and providing them with real pathways to employment and innovation, we can help shift the narrative from one of limitation to one of possibility and growth. This not only enhances their personal development but also strengthens resilience and sustainability across Mid & East Antrim.

Access to Play and Leisure

Within Mid & East Antrim there are significant barriers young people face in accessing play and leisure activities, particularly in rural areas, these include the need for more accessible, affordable, and safe recreational opportunities. Rural young people have an added disadvantage due to the proximity of these services.

Access to play and leisure is vital for the development of children and young people. Play enables the development of cognitive skills and physiological development particularly around co-ordination. Teamwork skills are enhanced through access to regular play opportunities.

Young people require access to safe spaces which allow them to take part in free and structured play.

Living in Safety and Stability

Young people identified the need to have safe spaces to socialise within, parks and outdoor areas are perceived to be dangerous after dark. Likewise walking in rural areas especially after dark is seen as unsafe. Online safety was a concern for many, especially cyberbullying.

Drugs and alcohol misuse have an impact on safety both for those using and those in the vicinity of the users. Young women feel they are especially vulnerable around young men who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Safe, secure, inclusive environments where young people can grow and learn without fear of harm are needed to allow young people to socialise appropriately and build mutual respect for others.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Across Mid & East Antrim there needs to be a holistic approach to supporting young people's emotional and physical wellbeing, with a focus on accessible facilities, educational programmes, and strong support networks. Young people need safe spaces to destress and escape from the pressures they are experiencing.

Youth Service delivery of preventative programmes within universal services can help to address the wellbeing of young people. Peer support to destigmatise accessing mental health initiatives can enhance the take up and effectiveness of these programmes.

Respect for Young People's Rights

There is the need for better education, support, and opportunities for young people to understand, advocate for, and exercise their rights, with a particular focus on gender equality, rural inclusion, ethnic diversity and LGBTQIA+ rights. Young women's rights need particular emphasis including educating young men on the negative impact their behaviour can have.

When young people's rights are upheld, it not only strengthens their confidence and self-worth but also encourages them to actively participate in their communities and society at large.

Learning and Achieving

Many young people feel that formal education does not give them the skill set to meet their future needs. Young people identify relevant life skills and accreditations that have practical value. Food poverty is seen as having a significant impact on their ability to learn along with anti-social behaviours in school settings. Support for school leavers who have been unable to gain employment and have low levels of qualifications is needed. Areas within Mid & East Antrim have concerningly high levels of young people outside of employment with no qualifications.

Barriers to learning, including attitudes towards formal education, can be addressed through appropriate support mechanisms.

Good Relations and Equality

Young people need more opportunities to meet with those from other communities, rural isolation is a barrier to this along with fear of paramilitaries.

Young people in Mid & East Antrim identified the demonisation of other communities, particularly traveller and ethnic minorities. Racism, homophobia and sexism were identified as having a significant impact on young people targeted by these.

Youth services can provide inclusive spaces for these attitudes to be explored and challenged in a supportive way.

Making a Positive Contribution to Society

Young people need more structures to provide opportunities for volunteering and social action to enable them to be more active citizens. Leadership skills are key to helping young people attain active citizenship.

Young people in Mid & East Antrim want to be involved in making decisions that affect them and others. The opportunities that many have need to be extended and barriers such as language, ethnic backgrounds, disability, gender and sexuality need to be recognised and addressed.

Priorities for Delivery

The needs of children and young people in Mid & East Antrim will be met through the delivery of Universal Services and Early Intervention/Prevention Initiatives. These will be guided by the principles outlined in the Youth Work Curriculum, *A Model for Effective Practice*, which provides a clear framework for delivering high quality, needs led youth work that supports young people's personal and social development. Regional Assessment of Need (RAON) and Regional Youth Development Plan (RYDP) are the key drivers of Department of Education supported youth provision and the setting of Regional Priorities. While these priorities are considered at a local level, the development of a Local Assessment of Need (LAON) and engagement with local stakeholders help shape relevant priorities for the Local Youth Development Plan (LYDP).

Based on the voices of children and young people across the Mid & East Antrim area the following priorities have emerged. (*These priorities are subject to ongoing review and will be dependent on resources available).*

Within the Mid & East Antrim area, Universal Services will focus on the following:

1. **Safe, Warm, Welcoming spaces for all young people**
    - Youth centres and spaces should be open when young people are available and when they need them. Evenings, weekends and holiday periods when young people have most availability is a priority.
    - These spaces should be age appropriate and relevant to all young people who choose to participate.
    - Accessibility and Inclusivity should be key factors in ensuring a welcoming environment.
    - Strategies to enable access for hard-to-reach young people including those in rural areas should be in place.
2. **Play, Leisure, Social and Creative opportunities**
    - Universal Youth Service programmes should be based around physical and creative activities which enable young people to boost their physical and emotional health and wellbeing.
    - These activities should encourage young people to build relationships with peers and youth workers, develop teambuilding skills, improve self-confidence and self-esteem, build motor skills.
3. **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (CRED)**
    - Respect for others will underpin all universal Youth Service delivery.
    - Diversity should be celebrated and encouraged through challenging prejudice enabling collaborative activities.
    - Different cultures should be recognised enabling others to understand the importance of identity and building supportive relationships.
4. **Emotional Health and Wellbeing**
    - Universal Youth Service provision should provide safe spaces where young people can talk openly in a safe trusting environment.

- Young people should have the opportunity to access programmes which focus on personal and social skills which develop self-esteem, self-confidence, emotional literacy and knowledge on mental health.

5. **Economic and Environmental Sustainability**
    - Universal Youth Services should enable young people to take part in activities and programmes focusing on issues impacting on their current and future economic wellbeing, life skills, environmental awareness, and practical actions that young people can take.
    - Young people led methodologies should be used to create a space to have their voices heard
6. **Local Voice, Leadership and Volunteering**
    - Universal Youth Services should create opportunities for young people to take on age-appropriate leadership and volunteering roles.

Within Mid & East Antrim, thematic areas that should be delivered through both Universal and Early Intervention and Prevention Services, will focus on the following:

1. **Living in safety and stability**
    - Within Mid & East Antrim there is a need for targeted programmes focusing on anti-hate crime, Ending Violence against Young Women and Girls, and tackling risk taking behaviour
    - Online safety particularly in Social Media spaces is a key priority
    - Programmes raising awareness on issues such as bullying, grooming, exploitation, and domestic abuse
2. **Emotional and Physical Health and Well-being,**
    - Programmes targeting the issues which impact negatively on young people's health including bullying, sectarianism, violence, diet, drugs, alcohol, vaping and barriers to physical activity These programmes should build on the skills developed from Universal Youth Service provision
3. **Learning and Achieving**
    - Targeted programmes focused on tackling barriers to learning, educational underachievement and school refusals
    - Targeted programmes should be developed for those disengaged from formal education
    - Support at key transitional periods should be available for young people experiencing difficulties at these times
4. **The voice of Children and Young people / Rights based youth work,**
    - Programmes enabling young people experiencing disaffection or discrimination to understand their rights and to engage positively within their communities
    - Effective promotion and delivery of Youth Voice to all eligible young people to enable broad representation of the diversity of young people from across Mid & East Antrim
5. **Inclusion, diversity and good relations**
    - Targeted programmes reflecting the diverse range of identities and cultures within communities

- Creating safe spaces to build meaningful, respectful relationships between young people from marginalised groups

6. **Youth Leadership Programmes / Learning and Achieving**
    - Programmes addressing barriers to employment, creating pathways to progression and social action programmes aimed at young people who are experiencing difficulties
7. **Widening Horizons and Global Leadership**
    - Opportunities for young people to broaden their outlook and develop their knowledge of other cultures and environments
    - Opportunities for young people who do not have access to widening their horizons whilst develop their leadership skills in a global context
8. **Thematic based programmes / Section 75**
    - Programmes empowering young people experiencing disadvantage due to their disability, identity, gender, sexuality, or race
    - Programmes focusing on inclusivity and tackling hate crime and discriminatory attitudes towards others from minority groups

This Youth Service delivery approach ensures that youth provision, both universal and targeted, reaches the areas of highest need, helping to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes. It promotes fairer delivery, strengthens effectiveness, and stays aligned with best practice and evidence-based approaches in youth work.

Alongside the delivery of Universal Services and thematic work focused on Early Intervention and Prevention, a range of targeted interventions are also being implemented in the Mid and East Antrim area working in partnership with other agencies to meet the specific needs of children and young people. These include:

- **ENGAGE**
  This targeted programme is focused on tackling paramilitarism through groupwork, outreach and detached work, peer mentoring and peer support

- **REACH**
  This targeted programme is focused on wellbeing for all and early intervention and prevention support under the joint Department of Education and Department of Health Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework provided in school settings

Within the scope of Enhanced Support, a range of targeted interventions are also being implemented in Mid and East Antrim area which also involves working in partnership with other agencies to meet the acute needs of children and young people. These include:

- **Connect Hospital**

  This programme provides enhanced support to young people impacted by paramilitarism, criminality and violence at the Antrim Hospital.

- **Connect Custody**

In addition to the Connect Hospital model, a new Connect pilot initiative has been developed at the PSNI Custody Suite in Antrim Police Station. This programme is also to provide enhanced support to young people taken into custody that have been impacted by paramilitarism, criminality and violence.

All targeted initiatives funded under Early Intervention and Enhanced Support are subject to annual funding being made available to EA.

Strategic Approach for Youth Services – Mid & East Antrim

Considering the findings from the Regional Assessment of Need, including the legislative and policy context for youth work, there are four emerging strategic themes to inform the Regional Youth Development Plan. Strategic themes are crucial as they provide a high-level framework for aligning efforts towards common goals and achieving the long-term objectives over the three-year planning period. The themes below will act as a roadmap to guide decision making and the prioritisation of delivery across the Mid & East Antrim area.

1. Child and Young Person Centred

In Mid & East Antrim, youth services will be planned and delivered through a rights-based approach that places the voices of children and young people at the heart of everything we do. There will be a focus on youth service provision in rural and underserved areas, along with outreach and mobile youth work to engage hard-to-reach groups.

Youth Service will promote inclusive practices to ensure participation of young people with disabilities, from minority backgrounds, and those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

Youth services will invest in safe, accessible, youth-friendly spaces; develop creative arts, sports and environmental programmes and address anti-social behaviour through positive diversionary inclusive activities.

2. Delivering Services Based on Need and through Partnership

In Mid & East Antrim, the delivery of youth services will be firmly rooted in the identified needs of children and young people across the district.

Youth service will deliver programmes that address the needs and issues affecting young people creating positive outcomes.

Delivery of youth services with be in partnership with young people, parents/guardians, schools, community, and other statutory services e.g. Health, Police, Housing, Social Services.

3. Evidence Informed

In Mid & East Antrim, we are committed to collecting only the information necessary to understand and demonstrate the benefits and impact of youth work in the lives of children and young people. Young people are at the heart of this, and their experiences will provide the main evidence to inform youth service delivery.

Relevant evidence from partners in other services e.g. Health, Police, Housing, Social Service, Charities, Schools along with Parents/Guardians will also be gathered, particularly where the source involved engagement with young people.

4. Empowering All our Staff

In Mid & East Antrim, we will ensure that all those delivering youth work are equipped with the curriculum resources, training, and skills necessary to meet the evolving needs of our children and young people.

Staff need the experience and confidence to deliver outreach and mobile youth work in order to engage with hard-to-reach young people and those in rural settings where there is limited infrastructure.

Staff need to be trained in trauma-informed and mental first aid approaches, and to develop skills which will enable community cohesion and address hatred and discrimination.

2026-2029 Mid & East Antrim Local Youth Development Plan

Success across the four key strategic themes in practice will look like:

1. Child and Young Person Centred	**1.1** Processes within the Mid & East Antrim Area will capture the views of children and young people to inform planning and delivery of services on a quarterly basis
	1.2 The Mid & East Antrim Action Plan will respond to the changing assessed needs of children and young people
2. Delivering Services Based on Need and through relevant Partnerships	**2.1** Accessible universal youth provision will be available for children and young people in the Mid & East Antrim Area at the right time and at the right place based on available resources
	2.2 Based on available resources (Youth Service funding and other earmarked funding) early intervention and prevention programmes will be delivered in Mid & East Antrim based on the assessed needs of children and young people
	2.3 Develop and deliver, in partnership with other agencies and government departments, enhanced support for children and young people to meet assessed need in the Mid & East Antrim area
3. Evidence Informed	**3.1** In line with the RYDP the LYDP will use a Benefits Realisation Framework for reporting on delivery
	3.2 Information systems will be used to support the development of evaluation and measurement of impact for local youth services in the Mid & East Antrim area
	3.3 Dynamic planning processes will drive a flexible, responsive approach to service design and delivery that allows for continuous adaptation based on new evidence, feedback and changing needs.

 **4. Empowering All Our Staff**	**4.1** Increase recruitment, improve retention and recognise and celebrate the role of volunteers in youth services in the Mid & East Antrim area in line with the EA Youth Work Volunteer Strategy 2023-2029
	4.2 A skilled local workforce will be developed and supported to meet the needs of children and young people within universal and early intervention/prevention through a localised training programme in line with the EA Youth Service Workforce Development Strategy

Strategic Theme	**1. Child and Young Person Centered**				
Headline Goal	**Actions to Achieve Goal**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**How will we know it happened and worked?**
1.1 Processes within the Mid & East Antrim Area will capture the views of children and young people to inform planning and delivery of services	**1.1.1** Ongoing assessment of needs and priorities of children and young people to effectively inform the planning and delivery of services through consultations through LAG, Youth Voice, Local Voice and other relevant surveys				**Key Outputs:** Consultation Report
	1.1.2 Consult with children and young people to identify their needs against a particular theme to effectively inform the planning and delivery of services on a quarterly basis				**Key Outputs:** Consultation Report
	1.1.3 Ongoing review of feedback on the voices of children and young people and how EA has used the information to inform its decisions provided publicly for children and young people				**Key Outputs:** Young person friendly report published
1.2 The Mid & East Antrim Action Plan will respond to the changing assessed needs of children and young people	**1.2.1** Children and young people will be engaged to review data and to seek their views on how youth services can help address their changing needs				**Key Outputs:** Revision and update to the annual local action plans based on the assessed need

	1.2.2 Biannual review of local Action Plan completed, with updates made based on the Assessed Needs of children and young people				**Key Outputs:** Revision and update to the local youth action plan based on the identified needs

Strategic Theme	**2. Delivering Services Based on Need and through relevant Partnerships**				
Headline Goal	**Actions to Achieve Goal**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**How will we know it happened and worked?**
2.1 Accessible universal youth provision will be available for children and young people in the Mid & East Antrim Area at the right time and at the right place based on available resources	**2.1.1** Identification of universal open access requirements across Mid & East Antrim based on population, geography and need which ensures open access youth provision is provided in the right places, urban and rural, and at the right times				**Key Outputs:** Mapping completed of existing statutory and voluntary registered youth provision and any gaps identified
	2.1.2 Delivery of safe warm universal open access youth services delivered through existing statutory youth provision based on identified needs and resource				**Key Benefits:** **BU1**, **BU2, BU3, BU6**
	2.1.3 Delivery of universal open access youth services supported by Generic Non-Targeted funding through volunteer led organisations				**Key Benefits:** **BU1, BU2, BU3, BU6**
	2.1.4 Delivery of safe warm universal open access youth services supported by Local Area Based Funding to Voluntary Youth Organisations, based on identified needs and resources				**Key Benefits:** **BU1, BU2, BU3, BU6**
	2.1.5 Youth work curriculum delivered in line with *A Model for Effective Practice*, Department of Education Policy and priority age bands				**Key Benefits:** **BU1, BU2, BU3, BU6**

Strategic Theme	2. Delivering Services Based on Need and through relevant Partnerships				
Headline Goal	**Actions to Achieve Goal**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**How will we know it happened and worked?**
	2.1.6 Non-formal educational opportunities that enhance the learning and development of children and young people				**Key Benefits:** **BU5, BU6**
	2.1.7 Developing the Voice of Children and Young People				**Key Benefits:** **BU6**
	2.1.8 Emotional health and wellbeing for all Offer support services, workshops, and activities that help young people manage anxiety, build confidence, and develop coping strategies				**Key Benefits:** **BU6**
	2.1.9 Implementation of Community Relations Equality and Diversity & Shared Education				**Key Benefits:** **BU6**
	2.1.10 Encourage Healthy Play and Physical Activity Facilitate regular opportunities for fun, movement, and creative play to support emotional regulation, social skills, and physical wellbeing.				**Key Benefits:** **BU1, BU2, BU3, BU6**
	2.1.11 Reduce Screen Dependency by engaging young people in offline alternatives that promote face-to-face interaction, reduce isolation, and strengthen peer relationships				**Key Benefits:** **BU1, BU2, BU3, BU6**

Strategic Theme	2. Delivering Services Based on Need and through relevant Partnerships				
Headline Goal	**Actions to Achieve Goal**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**How will we know it happened and worked?**
	2.1.12 Supporting young people to volunteer and take active roles in shaping and delivering youth-led initiatives	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BU4, BU6**
2.2 Based on available resources (Youth Service funding and other earmarked funding) early intervention and prevention programmes will be delivered in Mid & East Antrim based on the assessed needs of children and young people	**2.2.1** Preventative Youth Work Curriculum on Violence and Harm Youth work initiatives that actively support the prevention of violence against women and girls, EVAWG) hate crime, racism Child Criminal Exploitation	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI9**
	2.2.2 Preventative Youth Work Curriculum Risk taking behaviours Substance misuse, gambling	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI9**
	2.2.3 Preventative Youth Curriculum For Health and Wellbeing focusing on emotional, physical and sexual health	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI9**
	2.2.4 Equality and Inclusion Strengthen community relations and increase access for Section 75 groups.	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI9**
	2.2.5 Address barriers to Learning and Achievement Particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalised children and young people	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI4, BEI9**
	2.2.6 Youth Leadership Development Focus on cultivating leadership skills	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI4, BEI5, BEI9**

Strategic Theme	2. Delivering Services Based on Need and through relevant Partnerships				
Headline Goal	**Actions to Achieve Goal**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**How will we know it happened and worked?**
	2.2.7 Preparation for Life and Work Life skills, Money Management, Independent Living	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI9**
	2.2.8 Strengthening digital resilience and online safety	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI9**
	2.2.9 Widening Horizons through local, national and international Youth Work	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI9**
	2.2.10 Environment and Sustainability through Youth Led Initiatives	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI9**
	2.2.11 Participation Youth Voice	→			**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI4, BEI9**
2.3 Develop and deliver, in partnership with other agencies and government departments, enhanced support for children and young people to meet assessed need in the Mid & East Antrim area	**2.3.1** Identification of partnership and Collaboration Projects/Programmes to support addressing the identified and ongoing needs of children and young people for this planning period (CDF, PCSP, school, CYPSP)	→	→	→	**Key Benefits:** **BEI1, BEI2, BEI3, BEI4, BEI6, BEI9**
	2.3.2 Ongoing critical self-reflection and evaluation of the effectiveness of processes and delivery of youth work in partnership	→			**Key Outputs:** Summary report on the returns of the evidence from delivery, moderation, and monitoring

Strategic Theme	**3. Evidence Informed**				
Headline Goal	**Actions to Achieve Goal**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**How will we know it happened and worked?**
3.1 In line with the RYDP the LYDP will use a Benefits Realisation Framework for reporting on delivery In line with the RYDP the LYDP will use a Benefits Realisation Framework for reporting on delivery	**3.1.1** Implementation of the Benefits Framework outlined on page 6 for the delivery of EA statutory and EA voluntary funded youth work delivery				**Key Outputs:** Benefits framework embedded into all youth service reporting
	3.1.2 Annual Reporting for EA Funded Youth Work, including an evaluation of the impact delivery is making on the lives of children and young people and any recommendations to change delivery approach based on evidence presented				**Key Outputs:** Annual Reporting completed
3.2 RYDP research will be used to support the development of evaluation and measurement of impact for local youth services in the Mid & East Antrim area	**3.2.1** Supporting and contributing to research with academic institutions to map and evaluate benefits realisation data, including its impact				**Key Outputs:** Contribution to research paper that informs aspects of future youth work planning or delivery
3.3 Pilots and tests of concepts will be used to evidence impact and inform future planning and delivery	**3.3.1** Endorsing and supporting pilot initiatives that assess the quality of youth work delivery through local universal open access and early intervention programmes.				**Key Outputs:** Pilot initiatives completed and evaluated, with documented findings informing aspects of future youth work planning or delivery

Strategic Theme	**4. Empowering All Our Staff** 				
Headline Goal	**Actions to Achieve Goal**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**How will we know it happened and worked?**
4.1 Increase recruitment, improve retention and recognise and celebrate the role of volunteers in youth services in the Mid & East Antrim area in line with the EA Youth Work Volunteer Strategy 2023-2029 Increase recruitment, improve retention and recognise and celebrate the role of volunteers in youth services in the Mid & East Antrim area in line with the EA Youth Work Volunteer Strategy 2023-2029	**4.1.1** Local Volunteer Celebration and Recognition events programme aligned to the annual National Volunteer Week (1-7 June) (Volunteer Strategy Theme: Celebrating the contribution of Volunteers in Youth Work)	→			**Key Outputs:** Programme established and agreed by 1 May 2026 and delivered over 1-7 June 2026 locally **Key Benefits:** **BU4, BU7, BU8,** **BEI5, BEI7, BEI8**
	4.1.2 Delivery of a programme of activities and actions for EA statutory youth work volunteers in line with the EA Volunteer Strategy themes	→	→	→	**Key Outputs:** Delivery of activities and actions in support of the volunteer strategy in place and successfully delivered with the engagement of EA Statutory Youth Service volunteers **Key Benefits:** **BU4, BU7, BU8,** **BEI5, BEI7, BEI8**

4.2 A skilled local workforce will be developed and supported to meet the needs of children and young people within universal and early intervention/ prevention through a localised training programme in line with the EA Youth Service Workforce Development Strategy	**4.2.1** Implement and support training to ensure a skilled workforce meets the evolving needs of children and young people, aligned with the Workforce Development Strategy				**Key Outputs:** Staff trained annually through programmes aligned with the EA Youth Service Workforce Development Strategy Staff feel knowledgeable around the need of children and young people. Staff feel confident in addressing those needs **Key Benefits:** **BU7, BU8** **BEI7, BEI8**