

# Framework for Termination or Reduction of Funding through the Funding Scheme for Regional and Local Voluntary Youth Organisations

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 1.1. This framework will provide a guide as to how the Education Authority Youth Service manage the process of exploring the termination or reduction of funding awarded. This should bring transparency to the process and the guidance will be available publicly on the Youth Service funding website.
- 1.2. Paragraph 4.6 of *Priorities for Youth (2013)* highlights the following actions to enhance the contribution of youth work to Raising Standards for All:
  - *Planning, funding, and delivery of youth work will be based on the ESA composite (local and regional) assessment of need and will support requirements linked to the DE key priorities at local, sub-regional and regional level.*
  - *ESA will develop a strategic three-year Regional Youth Development Plan (RYDP) for DE approval, which will be implemented via annual Youth Development Plans across all levels. These plans will take account of anticipated needs such as youth intervention programmes but will also require a degree of flexibility to deal with unforeseen circumstances and to adapt to meet changing needs.*
- 1.3. This section of the Department of Education's policy establishes the clear requirement for the funding of services to adapt and respond to assessed need and avoid the return to the static historic funding arrangements that existed previously.
- 1.4. This document, which has been developed after engagement with key stakeholders, will provide both the clarity needed and the authority required, for the Education Authority to make robust decisions about when the termination or reduction of an award is appropriate. It will provide a guide on issues including:
  - Underperforming services
  - Responses to critical incidents
  - Decreasing or removal of strategic relevance
  - Decreasing or removal of budget from the Department for Education
  - Notices to quit
- 1.5. The framework should be seen in both proactive and reactive terms. For example, it will allow the Education Authority to initiate the appropriate process

at times of default of services or alternatively it can guide an award recipient should they wish to submit a notice to quit.

- 1.6. The framework is not applicable to the normal ending of a funding award once its published end date has expired. What is important to note, however, is that all funding awards made by the Education Authority stipulate an end date, and receipt of funding in no way provides a guarantee of future funding beyond the end date of the award as advertised. Therefore, all funding awards terminate on the date laid out when initially advertised.
- 1.7. The framework does not provide guidance for delaying the start of an award or requests to extend an award beyond its normal lifespan. These issues are addressed specifically in the terms and conditions document of the funding scheme.

## **2. CONTEXT**

- 2.1. This framework is a guide to inform any key decisions that are required relating to the early termination or reduction of funding awarded through the Education Authority Funding Scheme for Local and Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations. It does so, considering the statutory and policy requirements laid out in the legal instruments governing the securing of adequate provision, and how service provision should be prioritised, especially in an era of finite resources and financial instability.
- 2.2. Any decision to terminate or reduce funding must only be undertaken after a robust process that is supported by relevant evidence. In line with the similar processes in statutory services, when undertaking either a vacancy review or an amendment to an existing establishment review, the outcome of any considerations in relation to a potential termination will be to either:
  - Maintain the status quo
  - Terminate and replace with an alternative provider
  - Terminate and reduce the services in line with revised assessment of need, strategic direction or policy requirements
  - Reduce the services, without terminating, in response to a reduced budget allocation from the Department for Education
  - Terminate without replacement
- 2.3. The responsibility for the final decision rests with the Director of Children and Young Peoples' Services. However, the responsibility for the development and implementation of the framework rests with Education Authority Youth Service Senior management.

- 2.4. As stated in the Terms & Conditions for the use of funding, the Education Authority may at its discretion withhold or suspend payment of any funds at any time if:
- the grant recipient uses the funds for purposes other than those for which they have been provided;
  - the Education Authority reasonably considers that the grant recipient has not made satisfactory progress with allocation of grants;
  - the Education Authority reasonably believes that the activities of the grant recipient may bring the reputation of the Department of Education or the Education Authority into disrepute;
  - the grant recipient provides the Education Authority with any materially misleading or intentionally inaccurate information;
  - the grant recipient fails to perform its obligations under its award; or
  - there is any change of control pertaining to the grant recipient's governance arrangements.

### **3. SUPPORT**

- 3.1. The Concordat between the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Northern Ireland Government (2012) outlines the following shared principles that define the relationship that should exist between statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector:
- Successful partnerships must be based on openness, trust, and recognition of the constraints on other partners.
  - Recognise the need to develop standards of good practice which ensure quality and accountability in relation to policies, services, management, and the use of resources.
- 3.2. To ensure the Education Authority Youth Service fulfilled its obligations, in relation to Priorities for Youth (2013), to support and collaborate with voluntary sector partners, a model of support was developed to enable effective capacity building as well as to drive quality standards across the areas of:
- Governance
  - Programme Development based on Assessed Need
  - Effective Partnership Working
  - Achieving the desired Impact of Services
  - Understanding Education Authority Reporting and Monitoring Processes
- 3.3. For more information, please refer to the Framework for Education Authority Youth Service Support to Funded Voluntary Sector Youth Providers which details the criteria for Level 1 support and Level 2 support when the nominated Regional Strategic provider (where applicable) cannot provide the support required.

## 4. ISSUES AND PROCESS

4.1. The avenues through which issues may be identified include:

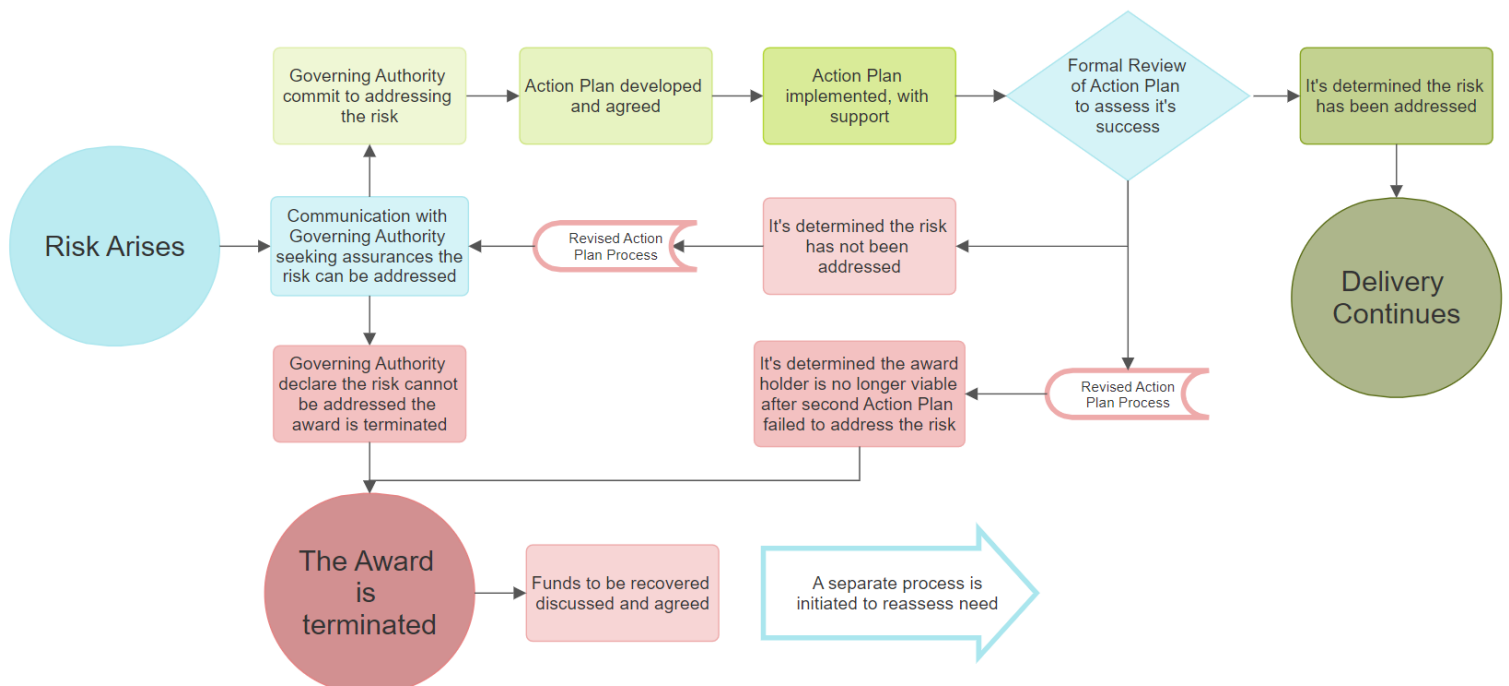
- Moderation Process
- Monitoring Processes (visits and/or reports submitted)
- Self-declaration
- Representation from strategic partners
- Representation from political representatives
- Representation from the community
- Reduced budget allocation from the Department for Education

4.2. As referred to in section 1.4., presenting risks fall under 4 main categories.

### 1. Underperforming services

- Service Delivery: the service delivered is not of the required standard or delivery is not in line with the requirements of the Funding Award.
- Governance: the structures and/or processes which govern the Awarded Organisation are no longer effective or viable.
- Reporting: the Awarded Organisation are not compliant with the reporting requirements of the Funding Award. This may include, late submission of reports, non-submission of reports or submission of inaccurate reports including financial returns.

The process for responding to Underperforming Services is as follows:



## 2. Responses to critical incidents

- a. Safety of children and young people: in the instance of a critical incident which risks the safety of children and young people, there may be the need to suspend an award for an investigation to take place. Should the investigation find that the continuation of the award will result in further safety risks for children and young people, possible solutions will be explored with the Managing Authority and nominated RVYO (if applicable). If there is not solution to ensure the safety of children and young people, the award will be terminated.
- b. Safety of staff and volunteers: in the instance of a critical incident which risks the safety of staff and volunteers, there may be the need to suspend an award for an investigation to take place. Should the investigation find that the continuation of the award will result in further safety risks for staff and volunteers, possible solutions will be explored with the Managing Authority and nominated RVYO (if applicable). If there is not solution to ensure the safety of staff and volunteers, the award will be terminated.
- c. Reputational damage: in the event of an incident which results in reputational damage to EA as a funder.

## 3. Decreasing or removal of strategic relevance

- a. There are various scenarios which may arise during the life span of a funding award which may bring into question the strategic relevance of the award at both Local and Regional level. For example;
  - i. Should the number of Local Voluntary Youth Organisations nominating a Regional Strategic provider as their Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation reduce below 10 groups, the award would no longer be deemed as a strategic priority and may require the resource to be re-allocated.
  - ii. Should the demographics of a local community change to the extent that the young people are no longer accessing the service, the award would no longer be deemed as a strategic priority and may require the resource to be re-allocated.
- b. The response to the changing need will consider whether the service should be reduced or removed in its totality and the decision will be made in the best interest of children and young people.
- c. The Education Authority must ensure all DE funded Youth Services are in line with Youth Work policy requirements. Should any funding awards fall outside the scope of DE Policy, after the review of Priorities for Youth, EA will be required to reassess funding awards which may result in the termination of active funding awards.

4. Decreasing or removal of budget from the Department for Education
  - a. Should the core Youth Service budget be reduced by the Department for Education. The Education Authority Youth Service will be required to reconsider all funding and resource commitments, including active funding awards made to Voluntary Youth Organisations.
  - b. It will be the decision of Education Authority Youth Service to prioritise and scale services based on the assessed needs of children and young people.
  
5. Notices to quit
  - a. In the event of Education Authority Youth Service receiving correspondence from an awarded organisation declaring they can no longer deliver on the award and intend to withdraw, a new end date for the award will be agreed. Education Authority Youth Service will review the assessed need and propose a response ensure the needs of children and young people are met in an appropriate manner. This may include:
    - i. Seeking a replacement provider of the funded service through a new application process
    - ii. Reducing or increasing the level of provision through an amended funding opportunity
    - iii. Re-allocating the resource to meet the assessed need through Statutory provision
    - iv. Pursuing a collaborative approach to meet the assessed need
    - v. Concluding that there is no need to replace the funded service

## **5. PROCESS**

- 5.1. The process and approval pathway for terminating an active funding award consists of 4 stages and is as follows:

