

YOUTH SERVICE LIAISON FORUM
10 December 2009
VSB Boardroom, Belfast

Present

Linda Wilson, Chairperson
Maureen Bennett
David Guilfoyle
Sara McCartan
Denis Palmer
June Trimble
Máire Young

Gilbert Bell
Cathy Galway
Christine Leacock
Oliver McKearney
Drew Neill
Jimmy Peel
Paddy White

In attendance

Ursula Meehan (Agenda item 6)

Secretariat: Sheila Rader

Apologies: Gerard Doran, Walker Ewart, John McCormick, Trevor Murphy,
Chris Quinn, Stephen Turner.

1.00 WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS

1.01 In her capacity as Chairperson of the YSLF, L Wilson, DE Director of Parents, Families and Communities welcomed members to the meeting. It was noted that agenda for this meeting had been designed to provide an opportunity (i) for some initial reflection of the linked set of seminars/conferences during Youth Service Month (November 2009); (ii) to ensure that colleagues were updated on policy development for youth; and (iii) to identify issues for more detailed consideration at future YSLF meetings.

2.00 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (01.06.09)

2.01 Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3.00 MATTERS ARISING

3.01 Min 4.04: Employment – pension options. C Galway reported that the paper from YouthNet had been discussed with Finance colleagues in DE. It was reported that DE considered this to be an issue for the ELBs.

In response to a query on whether or not this was an issue for ESA, it was stated that the report had also been copied to S McCurdy (ESAIT).

ELB representatives indicated that an issue remained for the ELB Finance Officers in relation to the lack of direction on whether or not the Department deemed the scheme identified to be appropriate. D Palmer also indicated that, whilst YouthNet had been asked to identify an appropriate scheme, the voluntary sector was 'out of the loop' in terms of the actions required to draw this issue to a satisfactory conclusion.

To progress this matter, it was agreed that DE representatives would engage in further discussion with the DE Finance Department, and also consult with ESA on the issue. ELBs and YouthNet would be kept informed on the outcome of these discussions.

ACTION

DE

3.02 Min 4.08: Youth Policy Advisory Group. A proposal paper was still under development, and would be presented at a future YSLF meeting.

3.03 Min 5.00: Community Relations Policy. It was reported that the final draft of the CR Policy had been approved by the Minister for submission to the Education Committee and then public consultation. It was noted that a preferred consultation period of 12 weeks had been proposed, along with advice on interim/transition arrangements.

3.04 Min 8.00: Education Advisory Forum Consultation. D Guilfoyle reported that YCNI had submitted a written response.

4.00 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UPDATES

4.01 Education and Skills Authority. An update was provided on the current position. In a statement issued on 01 December the Minister confirmed that, due to the delay in progressing the Education Bill, ESA would not be established by 1 January 2010. However planning would continue to progress on two fronts, i.e. planning for implementation, and planning for a gap of indeterminate length. From 1 January 2010 transitional governance and management arrangements would be implemented for all education sector RPA-affected bodies to ensure continuity of services, and progress towards convergence and planned efficiency savings.

4.02 Priorities for Youth. It was reported that the pre-consultation period was now completed. A successful two-day seminar, involving DE and youth service partners was held during November, and drafting of the Priorities for Youth would now begin.

4.03 Network for Youth. A paper was circulated outlining the Terms of Reference, and design issues, for the Network of Networks option. It was noted that ESAIT had agreed that ESA would undertake responsibility for managing the Network in the future. Input into options for the design of the Network for consideration by DE and ESA would be sought. A copy of the Terms of Reference would be placed on the YCNI website, and the Working Group would be notified of this.

A meeting of Education Sector stakeholders would now be convened to consider the Terms of Reference and design issues. Interface with other sectors would follow.

On a related matter, the Inspectorate was currently considering how it could best tap into the voice of young people. The Working Group would also give further consideration to this issue in relation to the Network.

Members discussed the relationship between the Network for Youth and the proposed Youth Assembly. Whilst it was recognised that, in the short term, the NI Assembly would move ahead on developing a mechanism to establish a Youth Assembly, YSLF members stressed the desirability of formal links and complementarity between the two.

4.04 "Youth Works" Initiative. A paper was presented, outlining the background, aim and objectives, and programme outputs of this IFI-funded strategic approach to youth work initiatives.

ACTION

DE

DE

D Guilfoyle

D Guilfoyle

D Guilfoyle

ACTION

DE is the statutory body accountable for overall implementation of the Youth Works Programme. YCNI has been asked to undertake the role of Managing Agent in the short-term, with ESA subsequently taking on this role when established.

This accredited programme, utilising a youth work methodology, would identify and target 16-17 year olds not in education, training or employment and with no formal qualifications, in communities suffering the greatest economic and social deprivation, and would seek to enable them to re-engage with formal education and training and help them fulfil their potential. The programme would be evaluated by ETI.

YSLF members welcomed this initiative, and the focus on the 16-17 age group.

5.00 YOUTH SERVICE MONTH - NOVEMBER 2009

5.01 The range of events staged across the sector during the month was noted. The "Thinking Seriously About ..." branding had provided a useful focus for, and link between, events.

5.02 The Youth Work in Schools Seminar was a very useful event, highlighting the need to identify opportunities and mechanisms for greater dialogue between the youth and schools sectors. A first draft of the report on this event would be available shortly.

D Guilfoyle

5.03 Shaping the Future of the Youth Service Conference. The draft report from this event was nearing completion, and would be circulated to the Youth Service Partners Group for initial comment. Key issues identified would be brought to the attention of the YSLF.

D Guilfoyle

The speakers' papers from this event would also assist in informing future debate, and it was noted that there would be merit in considering some further follow-up events.

6.00 UK YOUTH WORK WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MANIFESTO

6.01 U Meehan provided an overview on the current position. An update paper had been issued by LLUK, seeking endorsement/adoption of the options. It was noted that the home nations would have the opportunity to "customise" the manifesto as a tool to raise awareness and promote workforce development in each country.

6.02 D Palmer reported that a working group had been established to address major concerns of the voluntary sector – particularly issues related to volunteers and existing accreditation schemes, registration and licence to practice. Voluntary sector representatives were due to meet during the week commencing 14 December, in Scotland. YSLF would be kept updated on the outcome.

D Palmer

6.03 Whilst there was an expectation that LLUK would provide a common voice on a range issues, it was reported that there had been little or no development in some areas, e.g. mapping the voluntary sector workforce in NI; no movement since April 2009 on the preparation of a paper on registration and licence to practice. It was also noted that LLUK was up for re-licence in January 2010, and that the Advisory Group was to be re-established.

6.04 Discussion ensued on the desirability of stronger, more formal links between LLUK, the Youth Work Training Board, and the Department in order to develop workforce development plans that fit the needs in Northern Ireland.

6.05 It was agreed that J McCormick would be asked to convene a sub-group meeting, in January 2010, to identify the potential weaknesses and barriers in the current manifesto, to clarify what is required to meet Northern Ireland needs, and present proposals on the way forward to YSLF.

It was also agreed that B Henry, LLUK, should be invited to a future YSLF meeting.

7.00 BIG DEAL UPDATE

7.01 D Palmer gave an update report for information.

(i) The most recent quarterly monitoring meeting with Big Lottery Fund confirmed that progress on the strategic programme was in line with the targets set.

(ii) It was noted that the PlayBoard element would conclude at Christmas. An exit strategy had been developed.

(iii) The Impact Assessment for the 6-month process to distill the learning had been approved by the Big Lottery Fund.

7.02 D Neill reported that there had been a good response to the Food in Schools and the Priorities for Youth consultations organised by NI Youth Forum. Reports on both were scheduled to be submitted to the Department by week-ending 18 December.

8.00 NI YOUTH AWARDS

8.01 A proposal to extend the Awards to 2010 was agreed.

8.02 YCNI would formally write to the sectoral representatives for comments on the award categories for 2010.

8.03 In addition, the award process would be reviewed to determine how to involve young people in the assessment process.

9.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.01 Stakeholder/Reference Group. DE explained that it would like to organise a group of key stakeholders which could advise on the emerging policy. It was recognised that while it would be desirable to establish a "small" group, it would need to be representative of key stakeholders. The group could then call on other "expert" opinion as required.

YSLF members would advise on membership. It was envisaged that the Stakeholder/Reference Group would be convened in January 2010.

9.02 M Bennett drew members attention to the recently published "What Happens After an Inspection?" leaflet, which outlined the processes employed following an inspection, and the responses expected of all those concerned. It was noted that Youth sector inspections were included in this process.

ACTION

J McCormick

NIYF

D Guilfoyle

D Guilfoyle

All
DE

ACTION

9.03 On behalf of the Inspectorate, M Bennett raised a concern about the lack of statistical data in ETI Youth Reports, although there was an improvement in terms of membership data. It would be beneficial, as measures of achievement, if the type and level of data was increased (for example in terms of the “stickability” of young people in membership, and numbers progressing into junior leadership roles).

There was general agreement from YSLF members on the need to review and develop a standardised mechanism/method of information gathering across the sector. This issue would be considered at a future YSLF meeting.

D Guilfoyle

10.00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.01 Week commencing 01 February 2010 – exact date/time to be confirmed.

S Rader