

## Appendix 2

### Consultation: Draft Response DE Priorities for Youth

Text for the online form.

**1. Do you agree with the vision, aims and principles of youth work supported by the Department of Education as proposed (see Section 3 of the consultation document)?**

Mostly Agree

*While the Aims are acceptable in general terms, we have some concerns. In particular, the aim to closing the performance gap may be too simplistic. Firstly, your supporting evidence highlights the problem of not achieving minimum standards, which is not the same problem as a performance gap. Secondly, your supporting evidence does not benchmark results to non north of Ireland results. Therefore it is impossible to determine how much the performance gaps are due to inequalities in the system rather than just natural variation in human ability. Finally, the evidence is education focused rather than looking at the wider quality of life issues and/or non educational achievement. We would not like the approach to a) deliberately or indirectly hamper the higher level performers and b) remove support for children who may be achieving academically yet still have emotional, physical or family issues.*

**2. Do you agree that youth work supported by the Department of Education should be strategically aligned with the education priorities (see paragraph 2.17 of the consultation document)?**

Mostly Agree

*Though we have the same concerns as mentioned in Q1. There is a danger that alignment could be seen as prioritising activities that more directly support traditional academic educational achievement as the expense of practical and social learning and development. Additionally, we are concerned as to how this attempt, to forge a more robust strategic fit and operational relationship between the formal and informal education sector, will differ from previous unsuccessful efforts of the past? How will DE get beyond the rhetoric of integration and complementarity to the fusion of differing professional methodologies and practice paradigms?"*

Q2: Is there convincing evidence of a recognition and willingness within both sectors to effect closer working relationships and adding value to each others' functions?

**3 Do you consider that there is sufficient emphasis in the consultation document on enhancing participation for young people in the youth service?**

Agree

*Yes and we support efforts to encourage participation. Our only concerns would be that to encourage and include participation may require additional resources to be effective. Recognition needs to be afforded by DE as to how and where DE supported provision sits along a continuum of wider statutory and voluntary provision, so that the overall effort in any area can be maximised.*

*With reference to examples of good practice in the participation of young people, we would be happy to share our experiences of youth involvement through the Belfast Youth Forum.*

*Additionally, many youth workers and youth work organisations use arts and heritage to develop enhanced social and cognitive skills and overcome barriers to learning. Arts and heritage activities also encourage a culture of active participation that can have a legacy in to adult life.*

*Currently, nearly 40 per cent of audiences and participants taking part in culture and arts activities funded by Belfast City Council are under 25 years old, and the Council's Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012–15 identifies children and young people as a priority target group. Culture and arts can help them become more confident and accomplished. They can develop skills and experiences to become valuable employees and accomplished entrepreneurs. They will be our future artists and audiences.*

*Furthermore, the Cultural Framework is underpinned by the values of access and equity and will target in particular 'hard-to-reach' audiences and participants, including children and young people with disabilities, from minority ethnic backgrounds and living in areas of deprivation.*

**4(a) Do you agree with the proposed actions in Priority 1 (see paragraph 4.5 of the consultation document)? (See Question 4(b) which seeks comments specifically on proposed age bands.)**

Mostly Agree

*We would likely further details as to how ESA will relate to other structures such as CYPSP (5.4-5).*

*While the example outcomes framework in appendix 10 is useful, we would also like to see some headline targets. For example, an XX% reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training by 20XX; an XX% reduction in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour involving young people by 20XX, an XX% reduction in absenteeism levels by 20XX; an XX reduction in teenage pregnancies by 20XX; an XX reduction in suicides involving young people, etc. Of course these are only examples and any final list would have to align to the overall outcomes expected by the DE.*

**4(b) Do you agree with the proposed age bands for youth provision, as set out in action 7, paragraph 4.5 of the consultation document?**

Mostly Agree

*Though we would class the 4-8 age group as children rather than youth. This is not a transitional category. For early years there is a preventative emphasis but other actions may be more beneficial in terms of educational outcomes e.g. reading recovery.*

**5(a) Do you agree with the proposed actions in Priority 2 (see paragraph 4.7 of the consultation document)? (See Question 5(b) which seeks comments specifically on the action on additional targeted provision).**

Agree

**5(b) Do you agree that additional targeted provision should be supported to help meet the needs of specific groups of young people assessed as facing barriers to learning, as proposed in action 3, paragraph 4.7 of the consultation document?**

Mostly Agree

*We would appreciate some clarity as to what is meant by “Young people who are newcomers or have English as an additional language.” We assume it means children of first generation immigrants and would approve that. However, the second clause could be applied to any English speaking bi-lingual young person, which is clearly too wide a definition.*

**6. Do you agree with the proposed actions in Priority 3 (see paragraph 4.11 of the consultation document)?**

Mostly Agree

*We would like to see more information on what the DE will do to encourage and support volunteers in the sector. The approach as outlined appears to place the responsibility solely on Youth Service providers.*

**7. Do you agree with the proposed actions in Priority 4 (see paragraph 4.17 of the consultation document)?**

Mostly Agree

*Point 4 states that prescriptive guidance is no longer needed and so the 1979 guidance will be withdrawn. However, the evaluation method used is very likely to become the defacto guidance as practitioners will modify their approach to pass the evaluation. Therefore it is important that the evaluation approach is developed with this consequence in mind. It should also include input from young people.*

**8. Do you agree with the proposed actions in Priority 5 (see paragraph 4.21 of the consultation document)?**

Mostly Agree

*We hope that the application and monitoring processes are not too onerous. While we appreciate that it is difficult to get the right balance in any funding processes it is important to remember that smaller organisations can be unfairly disadvantaged by complex application and monitoring processes especially where they are not proportionate to the amount of money being offered.*

**9. Please use the space below for any additional comments you wish to make about the Priorities for Youth.**

*We note the comments about the changes to funding for Youth work. In general terms we approve of the move to funding based on a needs assessment. However, we would like to see more information as to how this is likely to change the levels of funding from area to area. We would also be firmly against any system that penalised an area because of the availability of other funds or support. That is, downgrading the need score of an area because another funding source was contributing to that area or another agency was providing additional services. Such an approach would ultimately reduce the total funding available as it would discourage other agencies and philanthropists from contributing to an area.*