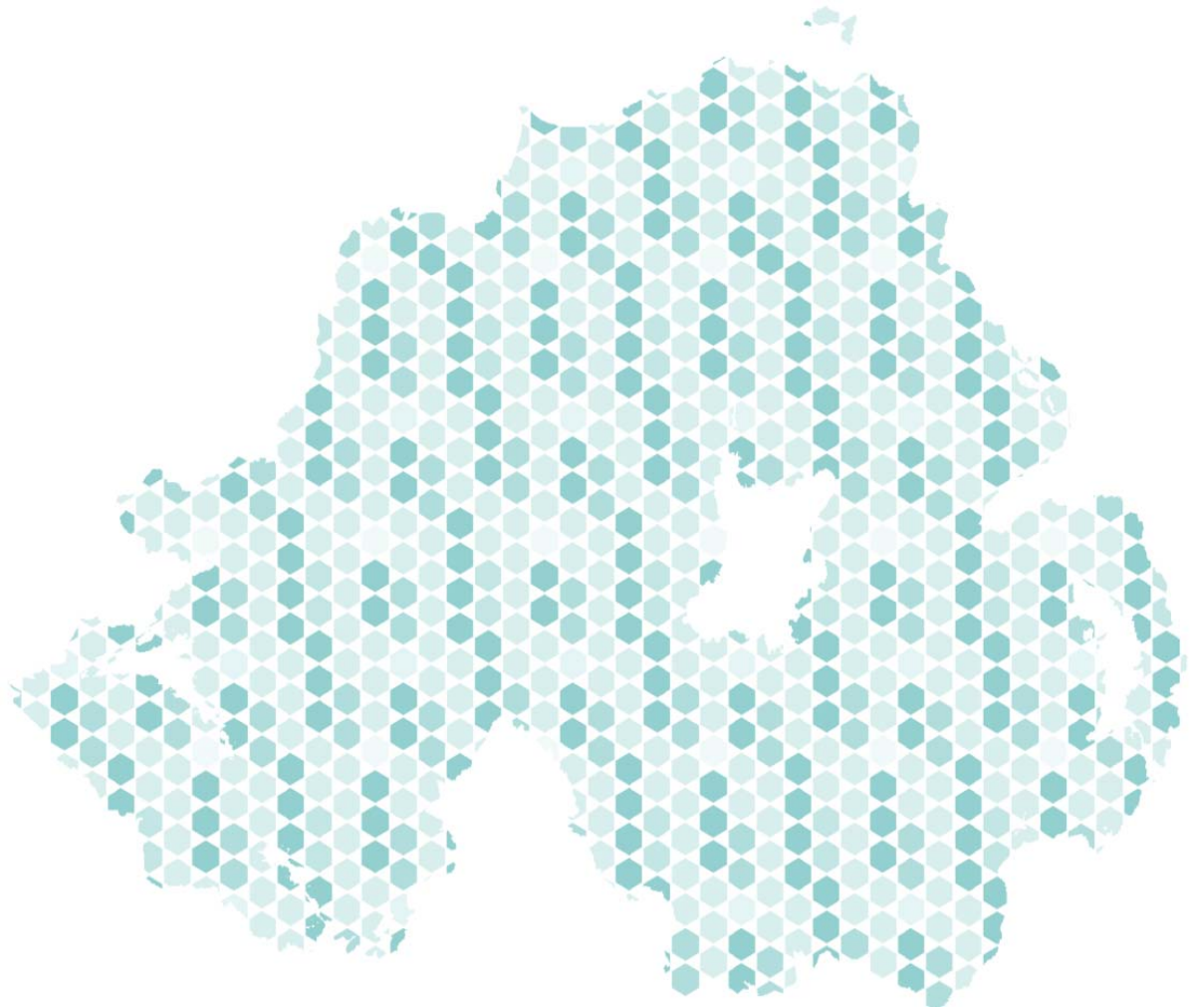


# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

South Belfast Area Project

Report of an Inspection  
in March 2010

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## 1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The South Belfast Area Project (SBAP) is part of the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) youth service and is managed by the area youth officer (AYO) with responsibility for east and south Belfast. The geographical area covered by the SBAP includes: Donegall Road, Donegall Pass, Finaghy, Lisburn Road, Sandy Row, Suffolk and Taughmonagh. According to the figures supplied by the BELB the total youth population between the ages of 4-25 years within the catchment area of the SBAP is 4,036. The current membership of the SBAP between the ages of 12-25 years is 780. The project reports that this membership figure represents at least 40% of the young people in their catchment area between the ages of 12-25 years. The project is located in the Finaghy youth centre and has access to training rooms, office space and an administrator who provides support for the South and West Belfast Area Projects.

1.2 The BELB developed the concept of an area project to raise the standards of youth work practice at local community level and within the established part-time controlled and voluntary provision. Since 1995, the BELB has developed the concept of outreach youth workers and currently deploys outreach youth workers on fixed term contracts within each area project. The priority for the area-based outreach workers is to work with marginalised young people or young people, between the ages of 14-25 years, who do not attend established youth provision. The first point of contact they have with the youth workers is normally in an outdoor public place. The BELB expect each area project to have a local steering committee which is representative of other youth providers and stakeholders, including political representatives, within the local community. These local steering committees are expected to direct the work of the local area projects.

1.3 The SBAP consists of two core-funded posts, a senior youth worker (SYO)/team leader and an area youth worker (AYW), along with two outreach youth workers whose posts are funded until March 2010<sup>1</sup>. All of these staff have a remit to support outreach youth work. The specific aim of the SBAP is to support the personal and social development of young people across the area and, in particular, those who feel socially excluded. The SBAP is also integral to the delivery of the South Belfast Area Plan which is implemented by the AYO.

1.4 The SBAP provides a range of age-appropriate and relevant programmes for young people between the ages of 12- 25 years. According to the figures supplied by the project. It has retained a significant minority of the members over the last four years. (Table 1)

**Table 1: Length of membership**

<b>New members</b>	<b>Registered 2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b>	<b>Registered 3<sup>rd</sup> Year</b>	<b>Registered 4<sup>th</sup> Year</b>	<b>Registered 5<sup>th</sup> Year</b>	<b>Total</b>
118 (30%)	225 (56%)	154 (39%)	134 (33%)	149 (37%)	780*

\*Made up as follows:

- 400 young people who have membership status and 198 of whom originally engaged with the SBAP through detached programmes;
- 380 individual detached young people.

<sup>1</sup> Funding has been extended until March 2011.

1.5 The project has also retained a core group of ten volunteer staff over the last four years. In addition, a group of 15 volunteers, consisting of peer mentors and trainee leaders, works under supervision and makes a valuable contribution to the project. At the time of the inspection the total membership of the SBAP was 780. This includes 380 individual detached young people who regularly engage with SBAP through a range of innovative programmes and activities. Additional information regarding membership details and staffing levels is documented in Appendix 1.

1.6 The evidence for this inspection is based on the observation of eight youth work sessions and discussions with the SYO, the AYW, two outreach youth workers and ten volunteers. The inspection team also held discussions with the AYO, 20 young people, four parents and attended the steering committee meeting. The inspection team also examined a range of relevant documentation prepared by the staff team.

## **2. QUALITY OF PASTORAL CARE**

2.1 The quality of arrangements for pastoral care in the project is outstanding. The key features of the pastoral care include the mutually respectful working relationships between the young people and the youth workers during the sessions observed, and the effective support systems in place for those young people experiencing specific difficulties, including referral to specialist agencies. The staff recognise the need to pass on accurate and relevant information to the young people. To do so they maintain effective working relationships with a number of agencies such as the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Housing Executive for Northern Ireland (HENI), the Department of Health and Social Services, Contact Youth Counselling Service, further and higher education institutions and schools. Almost all of the young people with whom the inspection team spoke stated that they felt safe during the activities provided by the youth work staff. The majority of young people spoke positively about the programmes offered and stated that they felt valued by the staff team. Appendix 2 illustrates the range and extent of the support provided by the staff team for individual young people during March 2008-2010.

## **3. CHILD PROTECTION**

3.1 The organisation has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for the safeguarding of children and young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

## **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

4.1 The team leader provides outstanding strategic leadership and management. She has a thorough understanding of the needs of the young people through ongoing mapping exercises of the area. This research is used well to inform the key results document which sets the operational plan for the project, usually for the year ahead. The planning is adversely affected by the short-term funding of the outreach youth workers, which in practice, limits the plan to nine months. There are effective mechanisms to ensure that the work of the project is well planned, reviewed and implemented. All new staff complete an induction period during which they shadow other workers, complete a mapping exercise of the area and are introduced to other local youth providers and to community organisations. The staff are encouraged to complete additional appropriate professional training courses. To date the courses have included the Advanced Diploma in Counselling, the Post-Graduate Diploma in Youth and Community Work, the BSc Hons in Community Youth Work, and suicide and drug awareness training. The team leader deploys the staff effectively, making good use of their skills and expertise.

4.2 The AYO has established open communication with the staff and provides effective support and challenge to assure the ongoing high quality of the youth provision. He has also secured extra part-time hours for the project in direct response to the uncertain staffing arrangements which have prevailed over the last three years.

4.3 The steering committee which is representative of other youth providers and stakeholders within the local community, including political representatives, is an effective mechanism for co-operation between statutory, voluntary and community groups to address the needs of the young people and the wider community. Ten young people, who have previously participated in the SBAP, are members of the steering committee; the current chairperson also became involved through the SBAP. They are highly motivated and active within their own communities and make a valuable contribution to the work of the steering committee.

4.4 The steering committee reports that, as other youth provision in the area continues to decline, there is a noticeable increase in the number of detached young people becoming involved with the work of the project. The steering committee has agreed criteria against which it evaluates and prioritises effectively the work of the SBAP in response to the increasing demands to meet local needs. The team leader supports the steering committee effectively through her good local knowledge, and advises them on how they are meeting their stated goals. The team is on track to complete its goals which include for example, working with a group of detached young people in the Donegall Road area, providing a personal and social programme for a group of young people from Suffolk, Finaghy and the Village areas and providing support for volunteers involved in youth work across south Belfast. The excellent progress, in achieving their goals, demonstrates the SBAP's efficiency and commitment to delivering diverse and challenging programmes relevant to the young people.

4.5 The staff consult effectively with the young people through ongoing evaluations, and through recording and analysing their level of participation and involvement. The AYO has recently initiated a satisfaction survey to ascertain what the young people enjoy about the youth provision and to ask for their recommendations and comments. This exercise is being facilitated by a young volunteer whose initial contact with the project was through the outreach programme.

4.6 The staff team is reflective and committed to the process of continuous self-improvement to meet effectively the needs of the young people and the wider community. They make good use of their daily recordings, the end of programme reports, funding reports and supervision to ensure that they continue to focus on the aim of the project. All staff are encouraged to think strategically about their work and to use their annual key result document as a basis for planning their work for the forthcoming year, and the anticipated learning outcomes for the young people. These outcomes are subsequently reviewed and presented in the annual report document. The staff make good use of the weekly team meetings to discuss their work and to debate professional issues. All staff have the opportunity to attend peer support and zone meetings organised by the AYO, where examples of best practice are disseminated. The staff work effectively as a team; they have a good range of skills and interests, demonstrate very good interpersonal skills, and are good role models, especially for the volunteers, who aspire to similar roles.

## **5. QUALITY OF PROVISION**

5.1 The staff team provides high quality creative and challenging programmes with a strong emphasis on inclusion and diversity. The provision includes programmes which are initially designed to attract those young people who feel socially excluded or do not attend established youth provision; it also offers the opportunity for progression and relevant

accreditation. The team leader, along with the administrator, has designed a progressive database which records how the current membership has engaged in the range of these programmes since 2006. (See table below)

<b>Programme Title</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Detached	198	132	66
Summer Scheme	108	62	46
Personal and Social Development	145	74	71
Sexual Health	80	68	12
Community Relations	53	25	28
Cross Cultural	52	27	25
Citizenship	82	44	38
Outdoor and Survival	70	36	34
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme	71	37	34
International	18	8	10
Prince's Trust XI/COPE	40	22	18
Peer Mentor /Trainee Leader Course	38	21	17

5.2 The project staff encourage female and male participation which is well reflected in all most all of the programmes. The project has identified sexual health as a particular issue and provides appropriate information and programmes. The database also records the progression of individual young people across the range of these programmes and indicates the following trends:

- 66% of detached young people participated in subsequent programmes after the initial contact;
- 9% of detached young people participated in two subsequent programmes;
- 12% of detached young people participated in four subsequent programme; and
- 25% of the detached young people have achieved recognised accreditation through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DoE), which has encouraged long-term participation with both short-term goals and in-built progression and challenge. The SBAP have made use of the DoE since 2003, and since then the following awards have been achieved; two gold, seven silver and 58 bronze. The participants describe the experience of out-door living and survival camps as life changing and contributing to their resilience and determination to succeed. The DoE has also proved very successful in retaining the young people as volunteers both within the DoE and within the project.

5.3 The excellent planning consistently reflects the central theme and core principles of the youth work curriculum. All the sessions observed were very well prepared with clear learning outcomes which were shared with and understood by the young people. The staff make good use of the limited resources and set a good pace for learning, using a good balance and range of activities and exercises. The lack of information and communication technology restricts the development of some programmes. The staff use evaluations at the end of each session well to record progress and to illustrate the learning that has taken place. The young people also provide feedback and comments at the end of each programme, which are used well to influence future provision. Each member of staff

maintains programme files which are used effectively to collate relevant information in relation to the young people's attendance and level of involvement. The SBAP is also working with a group of volunteers, who have been involved with the project over five years, to enable them to reflect on their personal journey and to assess the impact of specific interventions on their lifestyle choices.

5.4 The practice observed during the inspection included issue-based and detached work relevant to the issues affecting young people such as interface violence, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, under-age drinking, low self-esteem, lack of youth facilities, and intra-community tensions. The programmes enable the participants to gain an understanding and acceptance of both their own values and beliefs and those of others.

5.5 The staff promote and support the full participation of the young people through creative and challenging programmes, which allow for the young people's progression and acquisition of skills. For example, the cross-cultural and the 'Democracy Counts' programmes are extensions of programmes to develop responsibility within the young people and to extend their learning and experience in response to specific issues. In particular the 'Democracy Counts' programme motivates the young people to extend their understanding of the political structures in Northern Ireland, Britain and the Republic of Ireland. This group of young people secured funding from the Big Lottery and made good use of the participation worker from the Northern Ireland Youth Forum to design and deliver a relevant research-based programme.

5.6 The SBAP team works effectively in partnership with Fleming Fulton school to ensure that young people with physical disabilities have the opportunity to avail of the same youth work programmes as their non-disabled counterparts. This work and other programmes observed during the inspection reflect well the principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence.

5.7 One of the specific outreach programmes observed during the inspection was the late night 'drop-in' which operates on alternate Friday evenings in Finaghy youth centre and attracts at least 50 detached young people between the ages of 13-24 years. Representatives of the steering committee, including the PSNI and the Finaghy cross-roads group, acknowledge the valuable contribution of this targeted diversionary activity in reducing the extent and frequency of anti-social behaviour.

5.8 The SBAP has established effective partnerships with a range of voluntary and statutory youth providers, community organisations and funding bodies to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to youth work across the South Belfast Area. These partnerships allow the project to maintain a high standard of planning and delivery in the quality of the programmes. The team has worked in partnership with both the Chinese and Indian communities for many years and attend the South Belfast Roundtable with representatives from minority ethnic groups, local community groups, faith and political leaders and key statutory bodies. The links with relevant partners also enhances the provision for individual young people who may require support to reintegrate with their peers within the local community. The SBAP also provides training for the BCC community wardens and the PSNI community police officers to increase their understanding of the needs of the young people with whom they engage and of how they can encourage and support the young people to participate in their local communities. The SBAP has provided targeted support to part-time units across south Belfast including advice and information regarding training and curriculum resources.

5.9 The staff team is strategic in the co-ordinated efforts to build and extend the capacity within the local communities. For example, the team observed a small group of volunteers who were being prepared for their participation in the forthcoming Open College Network (OCN) Level 2 Introduction to Youth Work training course. The staff team delivered the



programme sensitively using a good range of materials to identify the participants' preferred learning style. In addition, the SBAP's commitment to building capacity within local communities is evident in the consistent promotion and celebration of the contribution of volunteers. Recently the team leader sourced a recognition scheme for volunteers through the World Wide Volunteering awards.<sup>2</sup>

5.10 The SBAP celebrates and records the achievements of the young people through photographs and articles published in the local press. Participants also receive certificates and celebration events are organised regularly to ensure that the parents and the community are aware of the young people's achievements. Photographs and media productions are also used as an effective monitoring tool.

## **6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

6.1 The young people demonstrate consistently high levels of active participation and enjoyment across the range of programmes. They are involved directly in identifying their needs and, with the support of the staff team, design suitable programmes or interventions to best meet their needs or interests. During this process the young people are well supported to achieve their targets and to identify the improvement in their skills including communication, leadership, problem-solving, and working as a member of a team. The young people are also encouraged to reflect on how the relevance of their learning for their every day lives and the potential impact on future life choices. The personal development programmes, including the cross-cultural and cross-community programmes, encourage the young people to begin to understand and identify their own values and beliefs, and to realise that their opinions may be different to others but still equally valid. The good quality of group work observed created a safe environment for these, sometimes, difficult and sensitive issues to be discussed with maturity.

6.2 The range and quality of outcomes for the young people is very good. The SBAP has delivered a number of both accredited and non-accredited personal and social programmes, including citizenship, training for youth forums, leadership and peer mentoring, to enable the young people to play a more active role within their community. A group of young people from Finaghy, including some participants in the SBAP, recently completed successfully a road safety campaign. The campaign received the support of cross -party local representatives and resulted in the development of two traffic calming islands on Finaghy Road South.

6.3 The wide range of age-appropriate and relevant learning opportunities (see Appendix 3) further illustrates the very good range of outcomes. In almost all of the sessions the young people enjoy very good working relationships with each other. The inspection team observed the young people demonstrating a willingness to take responsibility for their own affairs, engaging with the staff in a mature and meaningful way, and empowered to make good choices for their future. Many of the older young people are volunteers and part-time staff within other BELB youth projects including the SBAP.

## **7. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

7.1 The strengths of the provision include:

- the outstanding quality of the strategic leadership and management provided by the team leader;

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<sup>2</sup> World Wide Volunteering is a non-profit making organisation whose aim is to make it easier for people of all ages to volunteer.

- the effectiveness of the steering committee in evaluating and prioritising the provision within the limited resources;
- the high quality of the creative and challenging programmes including a strong emphasis on inclusion and diversity;
- the excellent planning that consistently reflects the central theme and core principles of the youth work curriculum;
- the consistently high levels of active participation and enjoyment by the young people, and their subsequent more positive contribution to their community; and
- the very good range and quality of the outcomes for the young people, including relevant accreditation and progression to leadership roles within their communities.

## 8. **CONCLUSION**

The quality of youth provision provided by the project is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The project has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Total Membership

Total membership over last three years and current membership:	M 10-15	F 10-15	M 16-18	F 16-18	M 19+	F 19+	Total
2006/07	250	242	147	138	37	35	849
2007/08	208	211	132	97	29	25	702
2008/09	176	157	142	121	27	39	662
2009/10 Current membership	126	59	72	41	39	63	780*

\*Made up as follows:

- 400 young people who have membership status and 198 of whom originally engaged with the SBAP through detached programmes;
- 380 individual detached young people

### Members come from the following ethnic backgrounds

Ethnic Origin	Number
White	373
Irish Travellers	0
Chinese	17
Other Asian	6
African/Caribbean	2
Eastern European	2
Those whose first language is not English	0
Other	0
Total	400

### Young people with a disability/additional needs

Please state how many current members have the following disability?	Number
Mental Health Disability	15
Learning Disability	18
Physical Disability	22

## Staffing Levels

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of voluntary staff	2	8	10
Number of part-time paid staff (when required/available)	1	5	6
Number of full-time youth workers	1	3	4
Number of part-time paid staff over 15 hrs	0	0	0
Youth tutor	0	0	0
Other (please state role)	0	0	0

**APPENDIX 2****THE FOCUS OF WORK WITH INDIVIDUAL YOUNG PEOPLE MARCH 2008-2010**

<b>Issue/nature of work</b>	<b>Number of young people</b>
Referral to counselling agencies	5
Depression/suicide intervention	7
Bullying/racism	2
Job advice/references	27
PSNI	20
Family issues	9
Pregnancies	3
Relationships/sexual orientation	33
Health issues-alcohol/drug misuse	16
Behaviour e.g. aggression	14
Stress	7
Grief	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE SBAP MARCH 2008-APRIL 2010**

- Fifteen pupils from Fleming Fulton completed their Bronze or Silver Prince's Trust XL Awards and four are completing the OCN Trainee Leader course.
- Eight Young leaders participated in a study trip to Los Angeles where they met the Nobel Peace Laureates.
- Twelve Young people participated in a community relations programme to Outward Bound Mallorca.
- Twenty six young females completed sexual health programmes.
- Eighteen young leaders/volunteers completed accredited training.
- Fifteen detached young people completed an intensive personal development residential experience.
- Ten young people visited Stormont and participated in a intergenerational debate and visited Westminster.
- Eleven young people have received nominations for the Young People's Award.

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