

Please continue on a separate page as necessary.

Title of Policy	<i>Youth Work Strategy, 2005-2008</i>
<p>Background</p> <p>In 2004, the Youth Service Liaison Forum (YSLF), an inter-agency body made of Department of Education (DE), Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF), the 5 Education and Library Boards (ELBs), the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Youth Council for NI, identified the lack of a clear co-ordinated strategy for taking forward youth work in Northern Ireland.</p>	
<p>Approach</p> <p>In initiating the process of drawing up a youth work strategy, the Youth Service Liaison Forum agreed to carry out an initial consultation with those in the field to gather their views and ideas.</p> <p>The phases of development included a pre-consultation period in late 2003, inviting written comments from a very wide range of sectors, both within and beyond the youth service (including participative structures of young people). The feedback from this pre-consultation then informed the framework for the design of the strategy.</p> <p>The Strategy, the first of its kind, was published in November 2005. The document highlights some of the main issues that affect the context which youth work currently operates, including needs, aspirations and rights of young people (aged 4-25), the background to public policy as it relates to youth work, and some of the other key issues and development affecting the youth service.</p> <p>The Strategy describes a new vision and mission for youth work and the values that should underpin it. It also sets out the priorities and aims that need to be effectively taken forward over the next three years.</p> <p>Once the strategy document was agreed by YSLF and DE, then a youth-friendly version was produced by NIYF in 2004. NIYF were commissioned by the Department of Education to consult widely with young people (in total over 100 via a number of focus groups). NIYF then submitted a fairly lengthy response on behalf of young people. The youth-friendly version was also used by some of the ELBs and a number of voluntary youth groups to consult directly with the young people they worked with.</p> <p>Altogether, around 60 responses were sent to the draft strategy. The sub-group of the YSLF re-convened to look at the analysis of the responses and to edit the draft accordingly. The draft strategy was then presented to DE for</p>	

them to publish in 2005.

The final document can be accessed at:

www.deni.gov.uk/youth_work_strategy_pdf_216kb

Outcomes

During pre-consultation, the issue of 'participation' emerged as central, and became one of the four 'pillars' of the *Youth Work Strategy, 2005-2008*, alongside 'effective inclusive youth work', 'resources and funding', and 'implementation'.

A sub-group of the YSLF has developed an Operational Plan for the delivery of the Youth Work Strategy. The Plan sets out priorities, operational objectives, the lead agency, and the working groups responsible for achieving the relevant objectives.

Lessons Learned (by public authority)

It is important to get the views of young people as early as possible in the pre-consultation and engagement stages. Young people themselves are more likely to know how to reach out to other, more marginalised young people; therefore, any outreach should be influenced by them. It is essential to see this as a real interest in the views of young people as key stakeholders, and taking on board those views on issues that affect them.

It is also essential that the outcomes are reported back to the young people.

Summary of Key Features from Policy Process

The engagements and consultation were meaningful and undertaken effectively. They helped to develop the key principles of the Youth Work Strategy, elevating the importance of 'participation' to a clearly defined core principle and created a working partnership with stakeholders

Consultation and engagement was undertaken, where appropriate, throughout the policy process and was not limited to the formal consultation period.

The group of young people involved was clear on what was expected from the engagement and consultation.