

## **Omagh Boys and Girls Youth Club Annual Report** **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 – March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024**

Founded in 1952, Omagh Boys and Girls Youth Club is the only full-time voluntary youth organisation in the Fermanagh Omagh District Council region. Under the new Funding Arrangement Scheme for the voluntary sector which was instituted by the Education Authority in 2021, funding on a two year cycle (April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021-March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023) was awarded to the club following a successful application by the management committee, thus replacing all previous annual funding arrangements.

This was an historic year for the club with the election of our first female chairperson Ms Aideen Floyd on October 17<sup>th</sup> 2023.

### **Education Authority Youth Service Delivery Plan for funding at Omagh Boys and Girls Club** **April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 – March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024:**

The Education Authority Youth Service set a Delivery Plan on the priority programme themes of youth work to be delivered taking into account government research data, local authorised research into the needs of young people and the local community social and economic profile. The following report now commences for the new funding cycle, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. We are expected to deliver our youth work programmes according to the following thematic areas outlined below.

#### **Quarter 1**

##### **Theme: Learning and Achieving**

Provide a Programme for P7s in Omagh to promote positive transition to secondary school.

Outcomes to be:

- Improved Health and wellbeing
- Enhanced Personal Capabilities
- Development of Thinking Skills, Life Skills and work Skills
- Improved Relationships with others

**Action Taken:** We recruited 12 young people for this programme and it was completed on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023. We offered opportunities to help give them confidence, improve their communication and social skills and help them integrate with their peers or other new people. We provided them and their parents with information on various issues ie Bullying and what strategies to use. They also enjoyed a team building exercise to Brunswick Bowling in Derry.

#### **Quarter 1**

##### **Theme: Participation:**

Deliver a Volunteer Development Programme.

Outcomes to be:

- Enhanced Personal Capabilities
- Development of Thinking Skills, Life Skills and work Skills
- Increased Participative Action.

**Action Taken:** We recruited 10 for this programme and it finished in August with 10 young people aged 16-18yrs achieving Accreditation OCN Level 2 in Sports Development and Volunteering. We also offered opportunities to complete a First Aid Course and a certificate in 'Keeping Children and Adults Safe' This was co-facilitated by Youth Action whom we have now registered with to achieve our maximum engagement in 2023.

## **Quarter 2**

### **Theme: Learning and Achieving**

Deliver an OCN L2 Award in Youth Leadership to senior members to gain accreditation.

Outcomes to be:

- Improve employment/volunteering opportunities.
- Improved Health and wellbeing
- Enhanced Personal Capabilities
- Improved Relationships with others
- Development of Thinking Skills, Life Skills and work Skills
- Increased Participative Action
- Active Citizenship

**Action Taken:** We recruited 12 young people aged 14-18 yrs who completed an Accredited OCN Level 2 in Youth Leadership. This programme involved 30 hours of learning around understanding of the skills and knowledge required for youth leaders. It provided an introduction into leadership styles, effective communication methods and relevant health and safety requirements. It was aimed at young people engaged in youth projects within our local area and enables progression to further learning in this area or into employment.

## **Quarter 2**

### **Theme: Living in Safety and Stability**

Develop and Deliver CSE Education Programme for 14-16yr olds Outcomes to be:

- Increased ability to make healthy choices, ☑ Reduction in risk taking behaviours.
- Improved Health and wellbeing
- Enhanced Personal Capabilities

**Action Taken:** We recruited 8 young women aged 16-18yrs and RelateNI co-delivered and completed a 4 session programme in July 2023. It included themed sessions on healthy relationships, the human body and development, sexual and reproductive health, sexuality and sexual behavior, values, rights, cultures and sexuality, understanding gender, violence and staying safe and skills for health and wellbeing.

## **Quarter 3**

### **Theme: Health and Wellbeing Drugs and Alcohol**

Awareness Outcomes to be:

- Increased ability to make healthy choices,
- Reduction in risk taking behaviours.
- The consequences of taking drugs and alcohol
- Addressing risk taking behaviours, including violence and drugs and alcohol
- Health and Wellbeing

**Action Taken:** We recruited 10 young people aged 11-13yrs for this Drug and Alcohol Awareness Programme completed in October 2023. This programme included issues around the dangers of taking drugs and alcohol, the effects of and why people take substances, what spiking is, how to look after yourself and friends, some common drugs in Northern Ireland and what to do in an emergency.

### **Quarter 3**

**Theme: Inclusion, Diversity, Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations** Planned Intervention with Beragh Swifts Outcomes to be:

- Greater awareness of Good Relations
- Greater participation of Section 75 young people.
- Better understanding of other cultures and beliefs
- Allowing them to question their own cultural identity.
- Building relationships with each other.
- Improved relationships with others

**Action Taken:** In Omagh, we had recently experienced identified sectarian activities where a Senior Police Officer was shot at a sports venue in Omagh. We, at Omagh Boys and Girls Club, had sent out letters of support to Beragh Swifts where the Police Officer worked as a volunteer and to Youth Sport, the venue where youth sport train. We arranged a partnership with Beragh Swifts where we applied to the Planned Intervention Fund to offer alternative activities during the summer weeks to provide opportunities for young people in and around Omagh area to build relationships and feel comfortable talking about their cultures and sharing their memories. This funding enabled us to set up a joint programme for 25 young people 15+ age group, majority male, to participate in a community relations project to help build relationships. This was facilitated by Omagh Boys and Girls Club staff where we offered 2 weeks of summer programmes including sessions on Prejudices and Discrimination and The Legacy of the Troubles and was completed in November 2023 with joint Fun Days in Beragh and at Omagh Boys and Girls Club.

### **Quarter 3**

**Theme: Inclusion, Diversity, Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations** Joint TBUC (Together Building United Communities) Programme.

Outcomes to be:

- Greater awareness of Good Relations
- Greater participation of Section 75 young people.
- Better understanding of other cultures and beliefs
- Allowing them to question their own cultural identity.
- Building relationships with each other.
- Enhanced personal capabilities
- Improved relationships with others

**Action Taken:** This was a joint TBUC programme with Omagh Youth Centre and Fintona area work where we applied to the Education Authority (EA) who act as Programme Administrator for the T:BUC Camps Programme on behalf of the Executive Office (TEO). We received funding for 45 young people to participate in a community relations programme where they met once per week in different venues from September 23 until December 2023 exploring issues about their different cultures and making lasting relationships.

### **Quarter 3**

#### **Theme: Health and Wellbeing**

Shared Education Mental Health Conference Outcomes to be:

- Deliver a Shared Education conference on Mental Health Awareness and strategies to cope to 70 young people aged 13yrs with Omagh EA Youth Services.
- Designing and delivering appropriate Mental Wellbeing based workshops
- Positive Mental Health Initiatives
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Enhanced personal capabilities.

**Action Taken:** Omagh Boys and Girls Club's Senior Member Committee have worked hard over two years around issues affecting the mental health of young people in Omagh. They produced a Mental Health Leaflet last year for young people in the Omagh area. This leaflet had practical tips, information, guidance and coping strategies for young people in dealing with mental health issues. As a follow up from this leaflet and their training and feedback from young people they decided to organise a conference for Year 8 pupils from secondary schools in Omagh. We formed a partnership with Education Authority (EA) Youth Services in Omagh where they worked together with their respective Senior Members groups to develop and deliver a one day conference, for 60 young people from various schools in Omagh, with workshops around mental health and strategies to cope. This concluded on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023

### **Quarter 4**

#### **Theme: Participation Structures.**

Senior and Junior Committees.

Outcomes to be:

- Enhancement of Y/P role in design and delivery of provision to meet their needs.
- Enhancement of Personal Capabilities
- Development of Thinking Skills
- Enable voices being heard
- Enable them to develop their employability skills,
- Enable them to develop communication skills
- Increased Participative Action
- Active Citizenship

**Action Taken:** These two groups are well established with 10 young people represented on the Junior Committee and 8 young people represented on the Senior Committee. The Junior Committee have been taking part in Drugs and Alcohol Training, Coping Skills and Social Action Awareness training. Then they were able to prepare for a Social Action Programme which was a Senior Citizens Party in December where they furnished the building with decorations, they dressed the tables, and invited schools to send representatives to entertain the senior citizens while they organised a lovely meal prepared by the Junior Committee and other volunteers. The Senior Committee completed an OCN Level 1 in Diversity in Society and an OCN Level 2 in Youth Leadership in preparation for them to fully volunteer within the club. As part of their volunteering they organised two Social Actions, the first being a Halloween Party, in October, for primary school children where they developed props, games and decorations for a fun filled day of scary entertainment for 55 young people. The second was a Mental Health Conference which we have referenced above where they were able to use their leadership skills to the full potential as they organised, developed, facilitated and evaluated the one day conference. Two representatives from this Senior Committee were elected from the group to represent them on the Management Committee.

#### **Quarter 4**

##### **Theme: Environmental Climate**

Outcomes to be:

- Develop skills in helping the environment, climate and recycling
- Awareness of environmental issues
- Development of Thinking Skills
- Enable voices being heard
- Enable them to develop communication skills
- Increased Participative Action

**Action Taken:** We delivered an Environment and Climate programme to develop skills in helping the environment, climate and recycling. This took place over 4 weeks and the young people concluded with building their own 'Bee Hotels' to help the solitary bee with a natural habitat and help the young people understand the importance of helping the environment.

#### **Quarter 1,2,3,4.**

##### **Theme: Health and Wellbeing**

We will facilitate sports and fitness programmes for 10-18 year-olds throughout the year.

Outcomes to be:

- Improved fitness
- Improved Health and wellbeing
- Enhanced Personal Capabilities
- Improved Relationships with others

**Action Taken:** This programme provided sports and fitness programmes throughout the year for hundreds of young people including Boxing, Creative Dance, Netball, Karate, Football, Badminton and fun games. Enhanced personal capabilities ranged from young people experiencing the fundamentals of these sports activities to achieving at the highest levels and their preferred choice of sports. Eg We achieved 17 Gold medals, 6 Silver medals and one Bronze medal in various boxing tournaments over the year but were very successful in Mid Ulster and Ulster Championships achieving 10 Golds and 1 Silver. We had one participant who was a semi-finalist in the All-Ireland 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Education Championships and the All-Ireland Boxing Championships we had 1 semi-finalist, 1 quarter finalist and 1 All Ireland Gold Medallist. We also performed to a high standard with our Creative Dance Group where we achieved 4 Golds, 2 Silver and 3 Bronze in Irish Championships but the greatest achievement was in the World Dance Competition held in England where our senior group came away with the gold to become World Champions.

#### **Moderations.**

As part of our Specification and Delivery Plan for EA funding we have to participate in the EA Moderation process where we received three inspections of our performance of the full year so that we secure future funding.

We had our first Moderation in September 2023 from an EA Youth Officer

The Theme was:

**Quality of Provision** - Quality of Curriculum; Headings of:

Co-Design  
Closing the Gap  
Outreach  
CRED  
Variety.

We achieved an 'Outstanding' classification and the officer was very impressed with all the work and with the support the Leader in Charge receives from staff and management committee.

We had our second Moderation in November 2023 from an EA Youth Officer. The Theme was:

**Outcome for Learners** – Progression of Young People; Headings were:

Baselines  
Leadership  
Participation  
Initiative  
Evaluating Experiences

We achieved an 'Outstanding' classification and the officer was very impressed with all the work, evidence files and with the support the Leader in Charge receives from young people, staff and management committee.

We had our third Moderation in March 2024 from an EA Youth Officer. The Theme was:

**Quality of Provision** – Planning, Engagement and Assessment;

Headings are:  
Planning  
Recruitment  
Engagement  
Facilitation  
Assessment

We achieved an 'Outstanding' classification and the officer was very impressed with all the work, evidence files and the young people's contribution to the planning in our organisation.

The beneficial outcomes of these youth work programmes for young people have been particularly effective in the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic and with the cost of living crisis. Our membership this year was 411. Having the opportunity also to participate in the wide variety of sports options (through the participation theme activities) was so vital for young people's mental and physical well-being. There is a mountain of evidence showing the benefits that sport and physical activity can have for young people's physical and mental health. Research by the Youth Sport Trust found that two thirds of school children said being active helped them learn, while three quarters of teachers said it improved pupils' academic progress.

Other outcomes identified for young people have been a development of their thinking, life and work skills. A safe space in our youth club environment is provided for their active involvement in activities, where they feel valued and their achievements are recognized. There is an enhancement in their personal capabilities, particularly greater awareness and development of leadership skills, confidence and self-esteem and a development of positive inter-peer relationships. This personal, social and educational development has resulted in young people taking responsibility, becoming engaged in active citizenship projects which promote volunteerism, inter-community and inter-generational

relations and greater understanding of others' lives whilst their awareness of threats to them through drugs and alcohol awareness courses has informed them of risk-taking behaviour. With such adult guidance and leadership these young people are on a continuing journey through participation in the range of programmes available to acquire the key transferable skills, so essential in the adolescent transition to adulthood and the world of work e.g. problem solving, creativity, using one's own initiative, taking responsibility, perseverance, working as part of team, showing empathy and communication with others. These authenticated skills are recorded by young people and are used as evidence of their achievements when making application for part time and for full-time posts in addition to using as testimonials for university applications.

Beyond our Education Authority Youth Service youth work specification programmes our club reaches out to promote cross community interaction among young people in the wider community through the facilitation of an inter primary schools tournament for all local primary schools in the local area involving up to 100 young people. This programme has been in operation for the past 10 years. Omagh Boys and Girls Club is a vital hub for the young people of Omagh to form relationships and to transform relationships through organized activities from its foundation as a voluntary youth club 72 years ago.

