
Ardoyne Youth Club

Annual Report 2023/24



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Background Information on AYC

Ardoyne Youth Club is a registered charity and has been delivering youth provision within the Ardoyne area of North Belfast for nearly 50 years. As an organisation we are very much aware of our role within the community, offering targeted youth provision which helps to develop the young people involved from a personal, social and educational viewpoint whilst also impacting upon the local Ardoyne community as a whole through the reduction of criminal activity, substance abuse and improving relations amongst young people and also between young people and other groups within the community.

We have been exploring new means of engaging young people through programmes which they can not only participate in but also help to design and deliver. Our programmes and activities are responsive to and reflective of the needs of the young people in the Ardoyne and wider area which we serve, thus we feel that this approach fosters a greater sense of engagement and buy in from young people which ultimately ensures programmes have a much greater impact in improving the quality of life that they experience.

Ardoyne Youth Club is committed to:

- Primacy will always be the needs and best interest of the young person
- All behaviour is communication, and we are committed to supporting young people whose behaviour is an inability to communicate and as a result SPIYC is committed to non-exclusive practices
- Enabling young people to make informed decisions and set-out and take responsibility for their own life journey
- Equity, diversity, and interdependence are the foundations on which we build our entire organisation
- Operate and deliver in a strength-based environment that ensures we help young people identify and build on their positive assets while seeking to make constant improvements in themselves and others
- We understand and accept the lived realities of young people and start the journey from where they presently sit.

Statistical Info on Local Community

AYC is in the urban Ardoyne ward, which has a population of 5,987 and falls within the Oldpark District Electoral Area. The population of children aged 0-15 in the Ardoyne ward is 1533 representing 25.61% of the total population. This is higher than the proportion of the overall NI population that are aged 0-15 (21%) by over 4%. The area has a lower proportion of over 65's (12.39%) than the NI population generally (16%). The statistics for economic activity in the Ardoyne ward reveal that there is a lower proportion of the population in paid employment (35.14%) and a lower proportion who are economically active (48.93%) than the NI population (57.61% and 66.22% respectively). This correlates with educational attainment statistics. Additionally, the percentage of the population with a degree or higher qualification in Ardoyne is 7.07%. This is significantly lower than the NI average (24%).

The deprivation measures are focused on Super Output areas, ranked from 1 = most deprived, to 890 = least deprived. Deprivation is measured across seven domains, when combined, produce an overall deprivation indication. The deprivation measure for Ardoyne 1, 2, and 3 are shown in the table below.

Deprivation Measures (1 = most deprived / 890 = least deprived)	Ardoyne 1	Ardoyne 2	Ardoyne 3
Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank	16	4	9
Income Domain Rank	29	8	67
Employment Domain Rank	19	15	12
Health Deprivation and Disability Domain Rank	19	12	6
Education, Skills and Training Domain Rank	58	39	19
Access to Services Domain Rank	814	827	804
Living Environment Domain Rank	78	66	87
Crime and Disorder Domain Rank	74	108	16

Top 5%	Red
Top 10%	Blue

The location of AYC falls within super output area 'Ardoyne 3' and all 3 Ardoyne super output areas are ranked within the top 5% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland in terms of overall deprivation, employment, and health and disability. Additionally, all 3 super output areas are ranked in the top 10% most deprived in terms of income, education, skills, and training, and living environment deprivation.

AYC seeks to reduce the level and impact of deprivation in the Ardoyne area through improving participant's confidence, self-esteem, and mental wellbeing, whilst also removing barriers to education, training, and employment.

Chairperson's Report

The year has seen Ardoyne Youth Club deliver effective quality youth provision throughout the community and beyond. It has increasingly developed our good relations work and seen the youth club along with partners win a number of awards that recognise the great achievements of the young people. Furthermore, due to the dedication of our Leader in charge, staff and volunteers, AYC has continued to successfully deliver a large range of programmes and activities, both consolidating and increasing old programmes as well as introducing new ones reaching new areas of the community. The programmes both accredited and non-accredited, all these programmes continually work in partnership with young people and look to help enhance their lives.

The membership of the young club is ever increasing due to the vast number of programmes on offer which the young people respond well to. The youth club to date has around 500 plus members. The young people who daily attend have the opportunity to avail of all the youth club's services, while also building and developing relationship with other young people and various partner organisations.

The management committee are very grateful to the leader in charge and his staff for the excellent work that they continue to deliver within the community and surrounding areas.^[1]_{SEP}

We are also very grateful to the young people and parents who continue to support the work of the staff team. I would like to thank all the various funders who continue to provide financial support to our organisation to allow us to provide the very best services to young people.

J McCafferty Chairperson

Senior Youth Worker Report

With another year gone past so quickly it's as honourable as the many before to be the Senior Youth Worker of this wonderful club. The Management, Staff, Members, and stakeholders due to their vision and passion to achieve, is what continues to provide the energy to ensure this youth club reaches the heights it does, the key to this is by putting young people in the lead. Throughout the year the youth club has continued to grow in a number of key areas, we have further advanced with what will be a state-of-the-art new purpose-built youth centre to replace our old one that we currently reside in. This will be a great asset to the entire community and future generations as the Youth Club over the last year has provided a variety of learning and fun based opportunities that meets the needs of the young people and the local community. The service the Youth Club offers is vitally important to the lives of the young people as the area continues to be plagued by levels of deprivation, no secondary education facility, a lack of and inadequate leisure and sports facilities is only another disadvantage to the work that is being done within the community.

Ardoyne Youth Club remains committed to the community and the young people to work alongside them in their development. We believe we can play a key role in supporting through difficult times, developing their skills and knowledge, along with educational and employability opportunities. Through this we want to give the young people the best opportunities and possibilities, this has helped Ardoyne Youth Club, and many other organisations acquire skilled volunteers, whilst promoting how effective volunteering is within the community.

Furthermore, we have continued to meet the targets that the organisation sets itself with regards to educational outcomes.

Best wishes

Joseph McNeill

Believe, Achieve, Succeed.

Meet the Staff

Senior Youth Worker

Joe McNeill

Engage Project

Stephen Konrad

Joe Gibson

Part Time Youth Work Staff

Julieann McEvoy Patrick McCullough

Damien Sparkes Thomas McGuinness

Rhea Glover Caoimhe Curran

Naoise Fitzpatrick Caitlin Ewing

Kathlin Allsopp Sean Maxwell

Jobstart Apprentice

Ailisa Frame

Programme Manager

Liam Davey

Youth Development Workers

Shonagh McConnell

Conor Nolan

Administrative Worker

Julieann McEvoy

Cleaner

Carmel Hughes

Volunteers

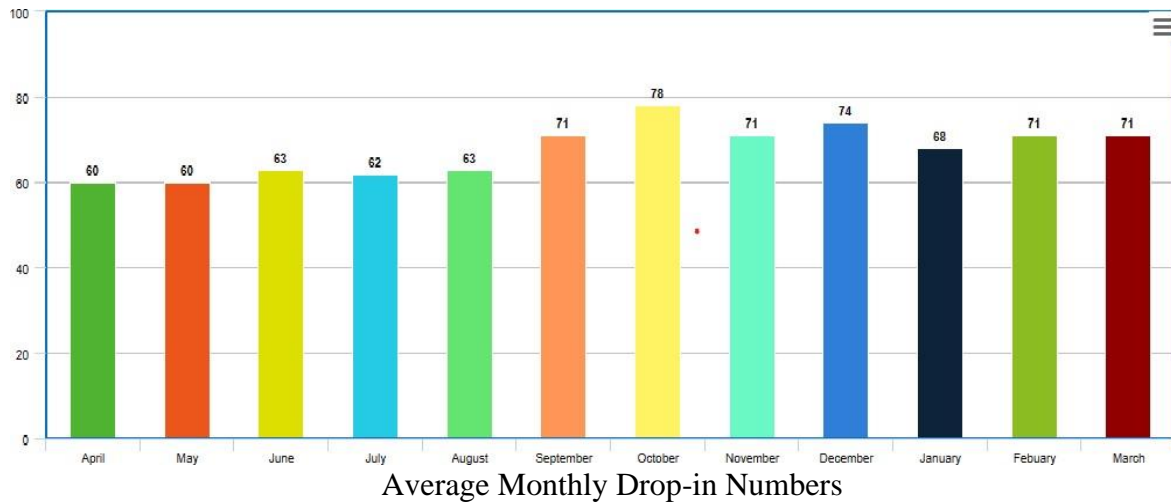
Pol Og Hendry Aimee McKee

Kevin McGuinness Erin Toman

Shannon Turley Alisha Madden

Local Area Based Programmes

Over the course of 2023/24 we delivered 19 different themed group work programmes as well as our drop-in provision which engaged young people up to 6 days a week.



AYC's drop-in programme is tailored to young people aged 7-25, and runs Sunday – Friday, including our Thursday night, Midnight Club. AYC drop-in provides young people with a safe and supportive space where young people can socialise and interact with their peers and staff, developing relationships. AYC drop-in 2 offers a range of nightly activities, including, recreational activities such as sports, and games, themed nights celebrating different aspects of life such as, international women's day, culture night and world kindness day. These events are planned, delivered by our youth committee who work in partnership with staff to design AYC's programme curriculum. This year, an average of 68 young people attended drop-in on a nightly basis, discounting young people engaged through our groupwork programmes, detached street-based work, scheme summer, 1-1 support and football teams.

Throughout this past year, we delivered nineteen LAB groupwork programmes. With the large number of programmes delivered during the 23/24 year, over 200 young people participated in sessions focusing on different topics which have been recognised by the local area assessment of need. These programmes facilitated sessions on issues relating to, living in safety and stability, health and well-being, inclusion, learning and achieving and environmental.

Our LAB street-based project in partnership with JPYCII proved a success this year. The shape of the project of street-based techniques during the allocated months and then workshop based programmes with young people worked extremely well. We actively engaged a lot of young people throughout the project, with some progressing onto programmes and some have been signposted onto partnership projects. Young people were challenging at times especially around local hotspots and interfaces such as the Hillview site, with staff roles and responsibilities tested in terms of safety. We believe moving forward a more prevalent police presence would help us a lot more. We also believe that street-based work from PUL side of the interface needs reviewed and improved massively.

International Programmes

This year Ardoyne Youth Club has led and partnered in a number of international based programmes that have seen participants from a range of communities engaged in these programmes that have greatly benefited their development and gained learning on global issues around the world, as well as their own communities. Over the last number of years, the youth club has focused on creating as many international programmes as it possible can, with an addition this year with our Eye-to-Eye Project. Many of these programmes range from 8-12 months in duration before setting off to the partner country to explore, develop and learn. Some of the global programmes we have been involved in this year have been as follows:

Belfast 2 Blanco:

This international programme is delivered in partnership with RCITY and is made up of young people from both sections of the Greater Ardoyne & Shankill communities. This good relations programme works with young people for an entire year, exploring self, community, and values before travelling to the country of South Africa to work in a township called Blanco. While in Blanco, young people support others, including children and families living in extreme poverty. The learning and development of the young people in this programme is hoped that upon return they will become active members in their communities.

Romania Project:

A project delivered in partnership with New Lodge Youth Centre which sees young people from both communities' travel to Romania to work in orphanages, care homes and disability centres. The project works with young people for 10 months prior, focusing on different themes such as leadership, inclusion, raising aspirations and community activism. Young people volunteer their time in the 174 Trust Disability Project and People's Kitchen Belfast, to prepare them for their trip to Romania and also to encourage supporting those in need.

Steps 2 the Future:

Part of our Engage project, this programme travelled to the US for a 16-day international trip, visiting 3 major cities of New York, Washington, and Orlando. The programme visited local organisations in these cities who specialise in themes such as gang culture, youth justice, gun violence, mental health, and homelessness. It's hoped that the learning and experiences from this international trip will have a lasting impact on all participants and their families.

Eye-to-Eye Project:

A new addition to AYC's international programmes this year was our Eye-to-Eye project, beginning in September 2023 and will run until May 2024 working with 10 young people aged 11-13. At this stage in young people's lives, they are just making the transition to secondary school and beginning adolescence, with this new project designed to fulfil that need. The project focuses on challenging young people's perceptions of self and others, delivering sessions on gender, race, sectarianism and disability. At the conclusion of this project, young people will travel to Poland for 4 days, exploring the effects of WW2 on different groups of peoples throughout Central Europe, visiting infamous concentration camps.

Engage Project

Steps 2 the Future

Steps 2 The Future participants are aged 16-18. Focusing on our young people's development. Looking at rising topics/issues that are affecting our young people within the community. The programme also focuses on life skills to help the young people prepare for young adult life and prepare them for future employment, education, and money management etc.

Mixed Senior Programme

This programme provides an alternative for young people who are at risk of involvement in drug and alcohol abuse, participation in anti-social behaviour such as organised fights at interface areas. This is an opportunity to engage in positive activities. The programme promotes positive youth, positive mental health and better decision making through an array of challenges and activities in their surrounding areas.

Intermediate Engage

The aim of this programme is to informally educate the young people on important relatable topics whilst engaging through fun based activities. The programme covers a wide range of topics adjusted to suit the young people's needs but tends to focus heavily on leadership, mental health and PSD. We aim to create a supportive environment where our young people can learn and grow together, striving to empower young men on becoming the best versions of themselves, whilst changing their perception on the community and the community's perception of young people.

Junior Programme

The aim of this programme is for the young people to come together and have fun whilst learning and growing through fun based informal educational sessions. The programme focuses on providing a safe and supportive environment where young people can explore their interests, develop new skills, and build positive relationships. They engage in activities like team building, creative projects, and discussions on emotions helping the young people figure how/why they might feel a certain way and how to respond/react whilst feeling this emotion. It's all about empowering young people and helping them navigate the challenges of adolescence.

ERC Programme

School based programme working with young people in Edmund Rice. We based this programme around their education goals, personal and social development and future goals. Getting them to understand why school and education is key in their development.

Midnight Club Programme

The development of the Midnight Club Programme has been a valuable asset to engaging young people of secondary school age over a several number of years. Midnight Club provides various programme activity for those young people secondary school aged within the greater Ardoyne Community and surrounding areas. Alongside the programme of activity, the young people have food supplied to them along with other additional support, such as issues-based workshops on women's rights, addictions and identifying forms of risk-taking behaviour.

Ardoyne Youth Club Midnight Club Programme runs on Thursday evenings from 9pm - 12 midnight. Young people attend Midnight Club from the local area, Oldpark, Shankill, New lodge and Ligoniel, as the programme reaches far across north and west Belfast. Our dedicated staff team have developed Midnight Club, making it a vibrant and welcoming environment, for young people to build relationships and participate in different programmes. This safe space allows young people to develop personally, socially and educationally on a weekly basis. Our youth workers work with young people to get feedback on Midnight Club so that strengths can be leveraged, and weaknesses can be improved.

Summer Scheme

Our Summer Scheme proved another fantastic success this year with over 200 young people between the ages of 7-18 engaged in various activities over the summer months.

The junior summer programme (7-10) ran for 4 weeks, engaging with 100 young people. Five morning sessions were delivered weekly, with young people participating in two skills-based sessions, two outdoor trips and one themed activity day. The intermediate summer programme (11-13) ran for 2 weeks, engaging with over 60 young people, involving an overnight residential, and different trips. The senior summer programme (14-18) ran for 2 weeks, with over 40 young people participating in different social action projects, including community clean ups, and inter-generational work at the local Holyrood House before some trips and outdoor activities to reward young people for their effort in the community.

These amazing programmes were only able to happen due to the hard work and effort from our senior staff team securing additional funding grants where possible and dedicated volunteers who ensured young people would have some sort of summer provision programme.

Acknowledgments



John Paul II Youth Club



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

BUNSCOIL GASÚR NA
CROISÉ NAÓLA



Holy Cross Boys' Primary School

Highlights of the Year

