

Education Authority Youth Service

Systemic Circles - Partnership with Marginalised Youth



1

Our journey through this presentation

- Understand the role of the Education Authority and Youth Services
- Outline the legacy of the Troubles
- New government policy to tackle paramilitary violence/criminal gangs
- Vulnerabilities of young people
- Youth work in this context and the UNCRC (Article 12)
- Redefining belonging and safe spaces
- Strategies and outcomes
- Learning to date



2



2

Key messages

- Services based on assessed need
- Youth Voice at the heart
- Evidence based practice
- CofC brings life to policies and curriculum
- Co-operation & Partnership
- Public Health Approach to problem solving



3

Northern Ireland

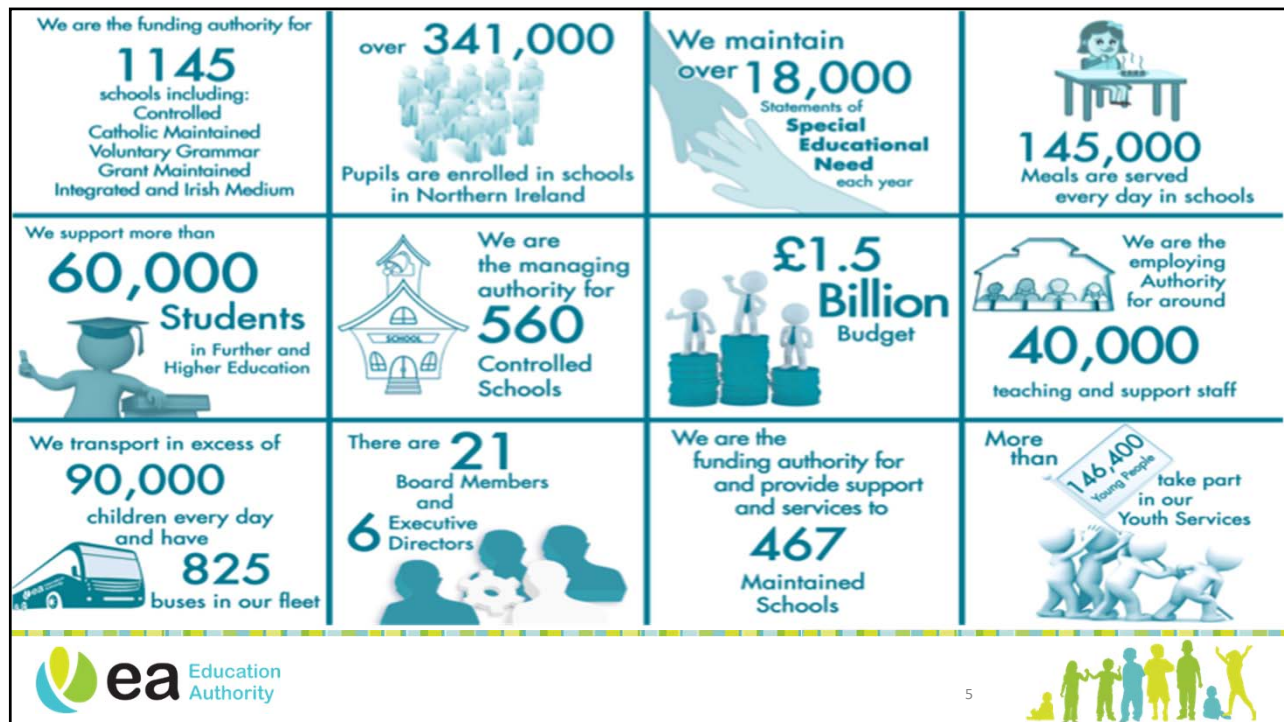
• Population	1.9 m
• Funding higher UK	18 %
• Children and Young People	523,264
• Children looked after	3,624
• Children in need	24,545
• Youth homelessness	3,495
• NEETS	15,000
• Free school meals	98,904
• Criminal Justice System	2,267



4



4



5

Introduction to Youth Services

278,372 young people engaged

19,000 volunteers

- Open access
- Aged 4 – 25 years
- Voluntary Participation
- Personal and Social Development
- Informal education
- Providing services based on assessed need
- Priority age bands 9 – 13; 14 – 18
- Addressing barriers to learning
- Focus on building leadership

6

Curriculum - Model of Effective Practice & QAF

A key part of the Quality Assurance

QAF

VALUES AT THE CORE OF YOUTH WORK

The key purpose of youth work is to:

• **Enable young people to develop individually, working with them to realise their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their skills, confidence and pride in learning and to reach their full potential.**

The Quality Assurance Framework is grounded in the core values of youth work. The Quality Assurance Framework reflects these values and helps the core values 'bring distinctive youth work from other, conventional, school processes involving young people. It recognises that youth workers need to be part of which the four cardinal values of youth work activities take place.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND INCLUSION
Youth work recognises, respects and is actively responsive to the wider networks of peers, communities, families and cultures which are important to children and young people and through these networks seeks to help them to achieve stronger relationships and collective identities, through the promotion of inclusivity.

PARTNERSHIP
Youth work takes place in partnership with children and young people and other agencies which contribute to their social, educational and personal development.

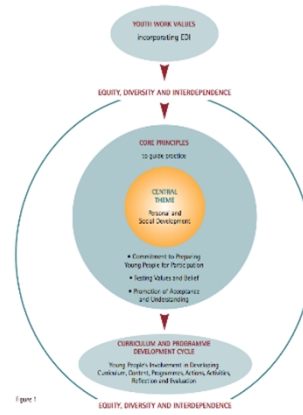
BEING, NOT JUST DOING
Youth work is concerned with how children and young people feel and not just with what they know and can do.

THE VOICE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Youth work is concerned with facilitating and empowering the voice of children and young people, encouraging and enabling them to influence the environment in which they live.

PARTNERS IN LEARNING
Youth work recognises the young person as a partner in a learning process, complementing formal education, promoting their access to learning opportunities which enable them to fulfil their potential.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT
Youth work safeguards the welfare of children and young people and provides them with a safe environment in which to explore their values, beliefs, ideas and issues.

A Model for Effective Practice



Generic Youth Services

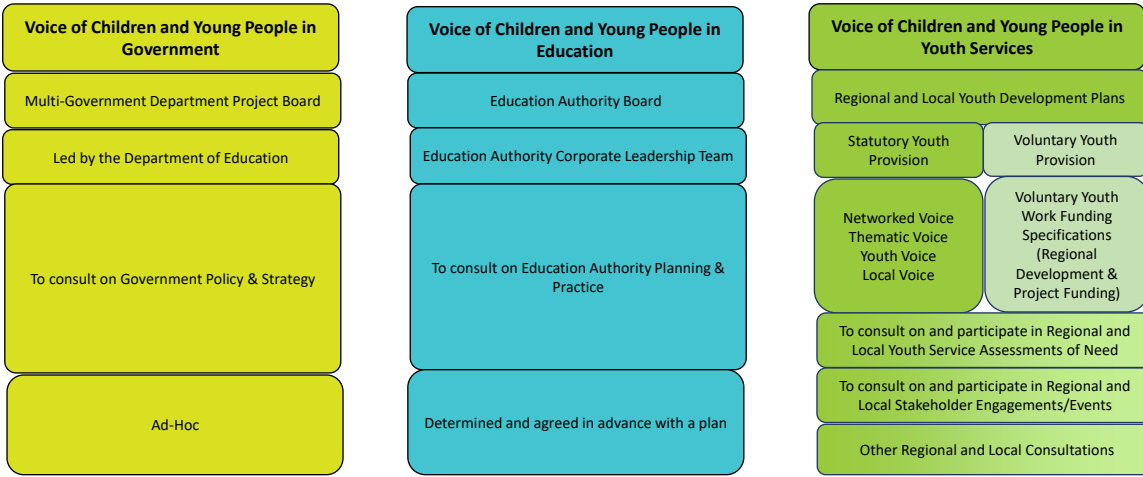
- Educational attainment
- Lifelong learning
- Employability
- Health and wellbeing
- Strengthening networks and social capital
- Self-efficacy
- Resilience
- Social and interpersonal
- Communication
- Leadership

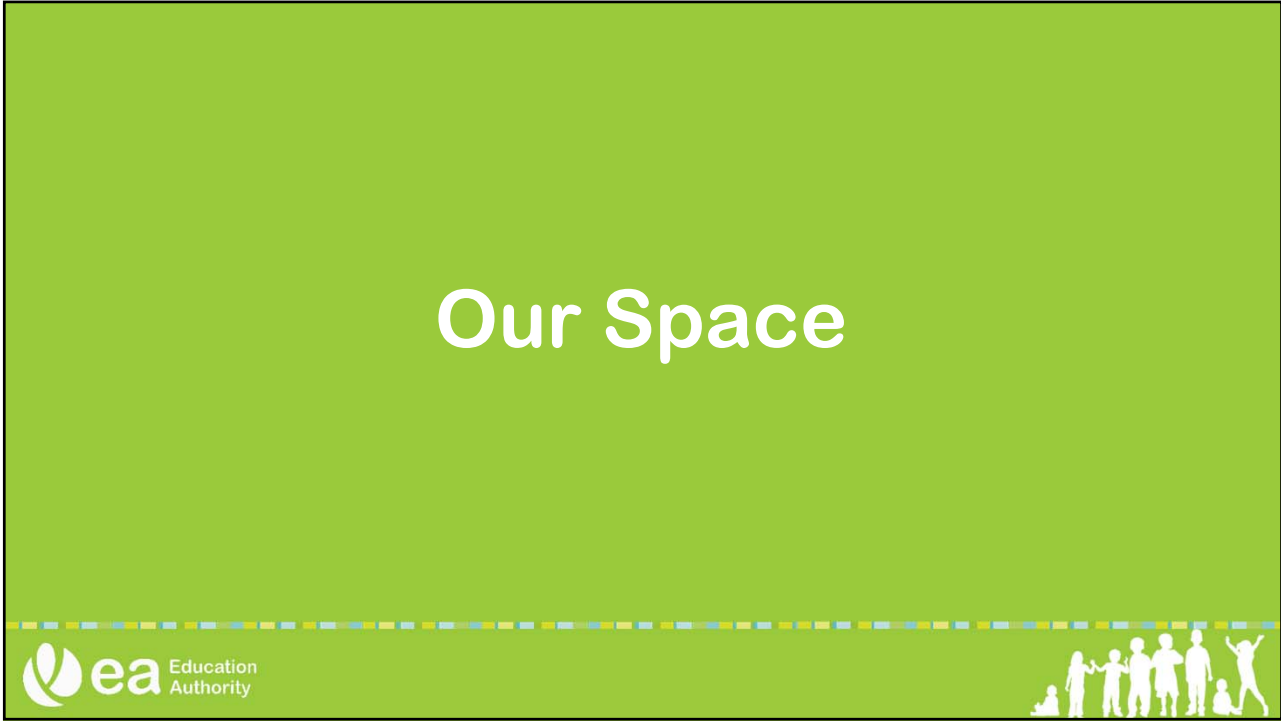


Lundy's Model of Participation

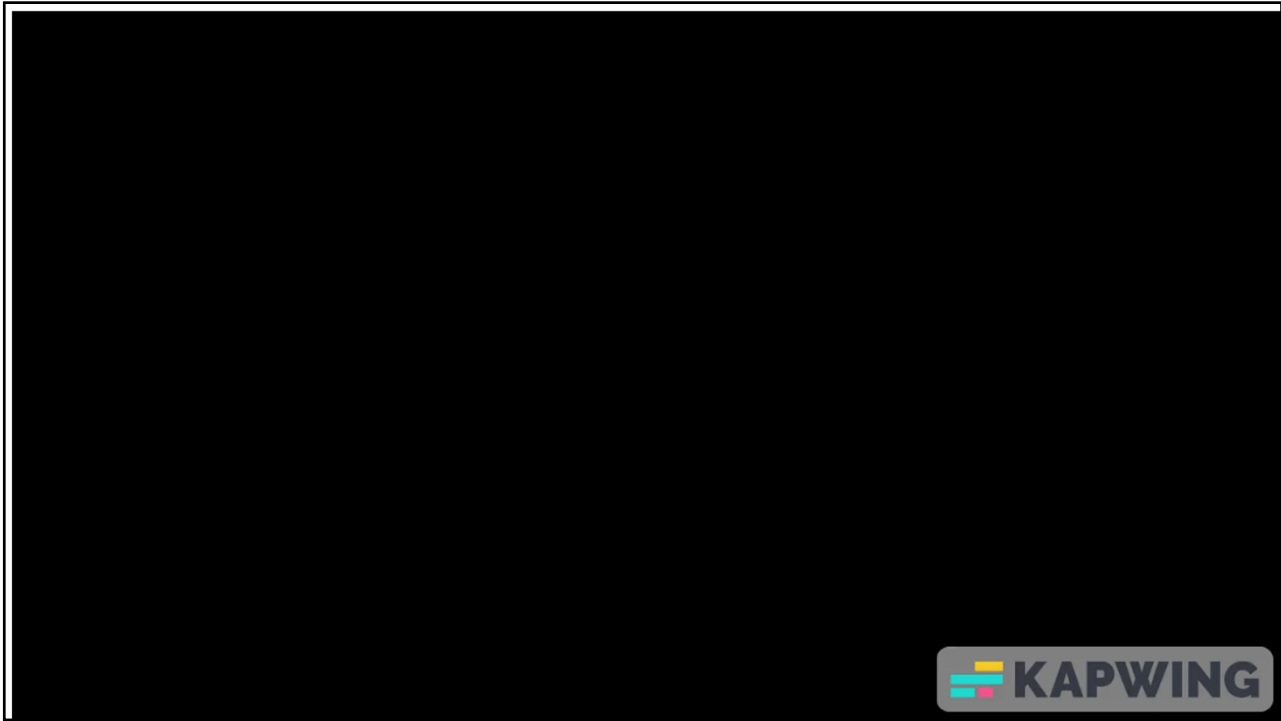


- **SPACE:** Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view
- **VOICE:** Children must be facilitated to express their view
- **AUDIENCE:** The view must be listened to
- **INFLUENCE:** The view must be acted upon as appropriate





11



12

Criminal Gangs

A Youth Work Approach to Violence Reduction



13

Legacy of the ‘troubles’ – Global Context

- *In 2016, an estimated **408 million** youth (aged 15-29) resided in settings affected by armed conflict or organised violence. This means that at least **one in four young people is affected by violence or armed conflict in some way**. Estimates of direct conflict deaths in 2015 suggest that more than **90 per cent of all casualties involved young males**. However, conflict, crime and other forms of violence impact young people’s lives in more ways than mortality. While it often goes unrecorded, young people suffer from a wide range of short-, medium- and long-term effects ranging from **repeated victimization to psychological trauma, identity-based discrimination and social and economic exclusion.***
- *(United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 2018: 5)*



14

Programme for Government

Fresh Start Agreement 2016



15

Tackling Paramilitarism Programme emerged from 'Fresh Start' Agreement (2015)

Supports people and communities across Northern Ireland who are vulnerable to paramilitary influence.

A combination of approaches to stop harm in the here and though place early interventions to ensure future generations are not exploited or traumatised through paramilitary coercion, control and violence.

Overall aim is to achieve safer communities that are resilient to paramilitarism, criminality and coercive control.



16

Key ask of Youth Services

- Ensure that young people were not recruited into Paramilitary Groups/Criminal Gangs
- Build relationships with the young people at risk of involvement in Paramilitary Activity/Criminal Gangs; diverting them away from harm
- Build resilience in young people at risk
- Build capacity of youth workers and teachers, enabling them to provide supports to children & young people, families and communities affected



17

Legacy and the impact on young people

- 1/4 (24.9%) reported having been **threatened** by someone that they believed to be in a paramilitary group
- 1/2 (50.9%) reported being **witness to an attack** being carried out by individuals they believed to be involved with a paramilitary group
- On average, young people who had witnessed an attack were 15.5 years old
- Adversity and probable trauma, particularly **interpersonal trauma**, appears to be elevated within this sample when compared with population estimates
- Compared with the NI population estimate of 37.3% for **exposure to any trauma** (Bunting et al., 2020), the rate was **93.2% within this sample**



18

48 % involved in Paramilitary Violence

Northern Ireland Population

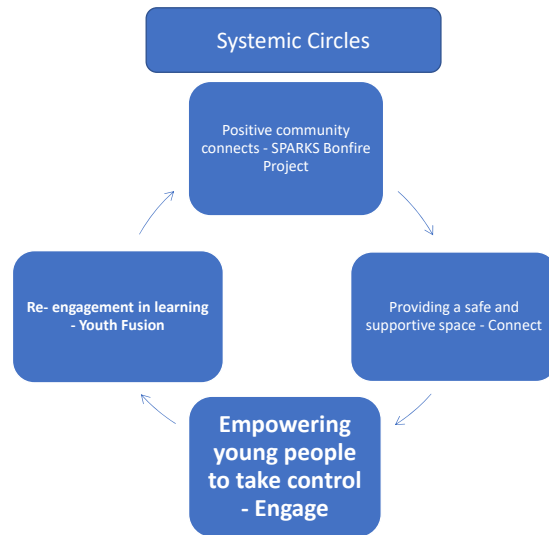
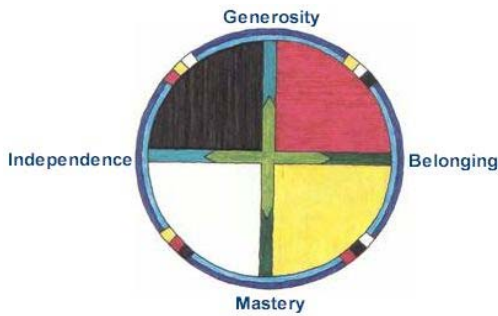
- 37 % involved in any traumatic event
- 9 % involved in direct community violence
- 3 % involved indirect violence in the home
- 17 % witnessed violence in the community
- 7 % witnessed indirect violence in the home
- 2 % involved in sexual violence
- 13 % mood disorder
- 2 % probable PTSD

Programme Sample

- 93 % involved in traumatic events
- 35 % involved in direct community violence
- 13 % involved in direct violence in the home
- 52 % witnessed violence in the community
- 16 % witnessed indirect violence in the home
- 35 % involved in sexual violence
- 48 % mood disorder
- 16 % probable PTSD



Structure of Delivery



SPARK

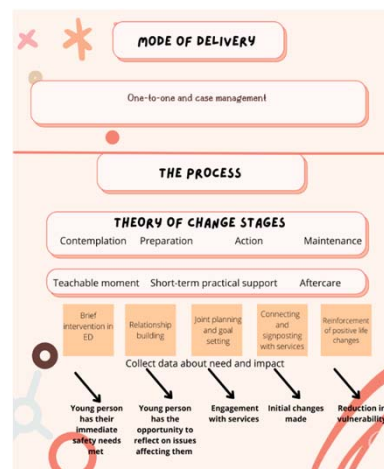
Youth work intervention and public health approach to the participation and safety and stability of our children and young people

Engages young people gathering in Bonfire areas. Several factors are reviewed to ascertain if a bonfire requires a Spark Programme including:

- Intra Community tension
- Anti-community behaviours
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Criminal coercion
- Bonfire locations (interface areas, unsafe sites)
- Aim to create a sense of belonging with young people which in turn should increase their sense of belonging within their community



The CONNECT Model



Engage

“you know its hard when you know you could be next, it plays with your mind you know. I can ring the worker at any time, and it helps”
(17 year old male)



23

Youth Fusion

Early prevention approach with an aim to reduce vulnerability.

- Youth worker led
- Relational learning
- Focuses on critical reflection
- 1:1 and small groups
- Curriculum safety and stability



24

The Role of the Youth Worker

Develop young people's **resilience and awareness of risk factors**

Increased resilience by **developing new skills, building knowledge and examining attitudes** of young people

To develop **effective tools** for tracking the personal and social development of young people, particularly confidence and self-esteem

To establish an **effective communication strategy and process** to access relevant information from all agencies involved

Identify **effective pathways for engagement** with children and young people at risk



Charter

Embedding Practice





27

Outcomes to date

- Reduction in public disorder
- Increase in protective factors
- Significant reduction in violence related incidents
- Cessation of PSA on young people (shootings)
- Increase in attendance and engagement in education
- Increase in self-efficacy
- Increase self belief
- Policy changes to address issues
- Model of change developed



28

Learning to Date

- Services based on assessed need
- Youth Voice at the heart
- Evidence based practice
- CofC brings life to policies and curriculum
- Co-operation & Partnership
- Public Health Approach to problem solving



Circle of Courage

Young People's perspective





31

References

[Partners in prevention: the role of health systems in the prevention of youth violence in post-conflict Northern Ireland](#)

[Beyond the Spark-Young People's perspectives on the 2021 Northern Ireland Riots Dr Colm Walsh](#)

[Disrupting the cycle of youth violence: The role of social support for youth in a Northern Irish Youth Work Programme](#)

[From contextual to criminal harms: young people's understanding and experiences of the violence of criminal exploitation](#)

[Common Purpose: A model for enhancing complex service designs in the prevention of higher harm youth violence](#)

[From Scoping to Supporting: A meta evaluation of targeted youth interventions within phase I of the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme \(TPP\)](#)

[Accelerators: Targeted Youth Services' Contribution Towards the Attainment of Multiple Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)



32