

REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 12 JANUARY 2004

REPORT ON: CITIZENSHIP IN YOUTH WORK

REPORT BY: HEAD OF COMMUNITIES

REPORT NO: 26-2004

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Advise the Committee of the publication by HM Inspectorate of Education of a report entitled "Citizenship in Youth Work" (1), which highlights amongst other examples of best practice The Corner, Young Persons Health and Information Project in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

2.1 note the publication of this report and its significance for youth work in Dundee.

2.2 instruct the Head of Communities to promote discussion on the issues raised by the report for youth workers in both the Local Authority and voluntary sectors.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the publication of this report.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 While there are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report, the promotion of active citizenship will directly address numerous targets set out in Local Agenda 21.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The report highlights the importance of local authorities and their partners continuing to address inequalities and to promote greater awareness and tolerance on the part of young people in relation to disability, ethnicity and servility.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 On 2 December 2003 HM Inspectorate of Education published "Citizenship in Youth Work". This was the first report published by HMIE on youth work since Youth Work in Scotland, which was published in 1991. The report highlights important aspects of youth work activity, including the nature of citizenship as it applies to young people and the partnerships between local authorities and voluntary organisations. Local authorities, community learning partnerships and others are asked to consider the findings of the report and to use these to inform future development of youth work in their area.

7.0 DEFINING CITIZENSHIP AND YOUTH WORK

7.1 The report adopts a definition of citizenship promoted by the Citizenship Foundation(2). In this definition, citizenship for young people is broadly defined as the "capability for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, economic, social and cultural life".

7.2 The HMIE recognise that young people learn about citizenship in a number of interconnected ways: firstly, by introduction to the concepts and values underpinning citizenship in a democracy; secondly, by being active citizens; and lastly, by being active and responsible members of their community. The National Occupational Standards for Youth Work (3) provides a definition of youth work that is used in the HMI report and conforms to the view of youth work adopted in Dundee:

7.3 “The key purpose of youth work is to work with young people to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, and to enable them to gain a voice, influence and a place in society in a period of their transition from dependence to independence.”

8.0 THE POLICY CONTEXT

8.1 In recent years there has been a much greater focus on the processes of democratic participation, not only in the UK, but in Europe and globally. This is set against the trends of fewer people voting in local, national and European elections and concern, in particular, about the numbers of young people who are not engaged as active citizens or do not exercise the democratic right to vote.

8.2 The Citizenship Foundation is quoted as noting “healthy democracies need well informed citizens who take an active interest in their community. They need people who value themselves and others and who are aware of the contribution they can make to a society” (2001).

8.3 The Executive identify a number of policy areas within which they would expect impact:

- Lifelong learning strategy – this strategy sets out the education priorities for the Scottish Executive for people aged 16 and over.
- Smart Successful Scotland – which sets out the priorities of the Scottish Executive for the sustainable economic development of the country.
- Community Regeneration Statement – which sets out the social justice priorities of the Scottish Executive for people living in disadvantaged communities.
- National priorities for education – values in citizenship is one in five national priorities adopted by the Executive.
- The National Cultural Strategy – this strategy sets out the broad cultural priorities for the Executive in the areas of arts and cultural.
- Active citizenship, in relation to youth work, should involve raising young people’s awareness of their rights and responsibilities as members of their community and should provide support to them to take an active interest in the democratic process. It also involves the development of skills and confidence to enable young people to participate in the making of decisions within the political, economic, social and cultural contexts of their lives.

9.0 CASE STUDIES IN GOOD PRACTICE

The Scottish Executive report details a number of case studies of good practice which included:

9.1 Political Engagement

- student councils
- youth conferences and forums
- youth councils
- Scottish Youth Parliament

9.2 Social Citizenship

- peer education
- youth participation

In this section of the report The Corner project in Dundee is highlighted as an example of best practice through its work to promote more “youth-friendly” services in health and social care across the wider community.

9.3 **Economic Citizenship**

While a number of examples are quoted, the report concludes that there was too limited a range of opportunities to develop economic citizenship for young people.

Discount cards, such as the Young Scot card, are mentioned positively, but the report concludes that there remains a particular issue of concern in disadvantaged urban and rural communities in Scotland in relation to the promotion of economic citizenship for young people.

9.4 **Cultural Citizenship**

Again, a number of examples of best practice are included within the report which concludes that it was evident that not all local authorities were linking the development of citizenship activities for young people with their cultural strategies.

10.0 **THE REPORT'S CONCLUSIONS**

10.1 The report concludes that young people participating in these four areas of citizenship development achieved significant personal development. They generally improved their skills, knowledge and confidence through a range of community involvement. Participation in local youth forums was a good starting point for those who wished to progress to involvement in the Scottish Youth Parliament. Others gained substantially from a range of projects with a social, cultural or economic focus.

10.2 Young people interviewed identified the benefits to them as being:

- a sense of achievement by making something happen
- increased self-confidence
- improved presentation skills
- opportunities to experience teamwork
- providing material for their curriculum vitae
- increased respect for other's views

The main areas of concern identified by the HMIE report were:

10.3 **Diversity and Sustainability**

There was general concern that, at this time, youth forums and social participation projects were not systematic across the country and as a result were difficult to sustain and, if not perceived as being central to effective decision making, could quickly become irrelevant to young people.

10.4 **Economic and Cultural Development**

The roles of economic activity and cultural development projects with young people have much scope for further development in relation to citizenship. In particular, the support for enterprise education projects involving young people in communities was highlighted as lacking.

10.4.1 Similarly, the HMI found that there was no evidence of systematic development of cultural strategies which impacted on youth services, or opportunities for young people across Scotland. The report highlighted that there was scope to involve marginalized groups more extensively to develop new projects that would provide them with a public voice for the first time.

10.5 **Representation and Diversity**

Young people recognise the difficulty of representing others in their age group. The report recognises that structures such as city-wide youth forums tend to favour the small minority of articulate and confident young people whose views can be presented as representing the majority. The work done in Dundee to localise representation and to recognise diversity stands up well with the conclusions of this section of the report.

- 10.6 **Recognition of Youth Achievements**
The HMI found that young people felt their personal and social development was not being sufficiently recognised. In particular, the report highlights that there were very few examples of young people being given the resources to recognise and celebrate achievers from their own age group.
- 10.6.1 The Working and Learning Theme of the Dundee Partnership has, coincidentally, already made a commitment to the development of peer led awards which would give young people the opportunity to recognise the contribution made by other young people. This report's recommendation should add impetus to that commitment.
- 10.7 **Sustaining Partnership Work**
The report concludes that while there is a wide range of partnerships between voluntary and statutory sectors, there were limited examples of sustainable partnerships and too few cases where citizenship was central to partnership working.
- 10.7.1 Elected members are reminded that in Dundee's case, the Dundee Youth Work Alliance which sought to operate as a partnership of youth work providers collapsed last year and that the Council and community planning partners are committed to rebuilding a sustainable model of partnership, involving all those who work with and for young people.
- 10.8 **Planning Structures**
Planning mechanisms for youth provision were criticised for being sometimes confusing, and often duly complicated.
- 10.8.1 The report speculates that implementation of community planning as a result of the Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) may provide a new context for making planning more coherent.
- 10.8.2 Locally, Dundee City Council and its partners are aware of the challenge they face if that goal is to be achieved.
- 11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**
- 11.1 A full copy of the report's recommendations are appended to this report (Appendix 1).
- 12.0 CONSULTATION**
- 12.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executives (Finance) and (Support Services), Directors of Education, Social Work and Leisure and Arts have been consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**
- 13.1 "Citizenship in Youth Work", HM Inspectorate of Education, SOB 2002.
- 13.2 "Education for Citizenship and Teaching of Democracy in Schools", September 1998, DFEE.
- 13.3 "The National Occupational Standards for Youth Work", Paulo 2002.

Stewart Murdoch
Head of Communities

19 December 2003

RECOMMENDATIONS

Contribution of youth forums, and similar mechanisms to active citizenship

- Provision of youth forums and similar mechanisms should be strengthened and better supported and more imaginative efforts should be made to promote participation by excluded young people.
- The personal development and achievements of young people involved should be more systematically recognised locally and nationally.
- Activities to develop citizenship should be more explicitly linked to democratic processes at local and national elections.
- Programmes focusing on economic and cultural aspects of citizenship should be considerably developed.

Partnerships between young people, voluntary and statutory sectors

- Where appropriate, voluntary sector organisations and young people should take a lead role in aspects of partnerships related to youth provision.
- Local authorities should take greater account of the nature of young people in voluntary groups when promoting their participation in partnerships. In particular, thought should be given to the timing and venues for meetings, ways of consulting groups outwith meetings, and any resource needs voluntary groups have to enable them to participate.
- Local authorities should take greater account of the transitory nature of youth and develop a rolling programme of engagement that will begin to work with young people from age 11 onwards. This should include the provision of role models, training programmes and exposure to good practice.

Planning for youth work

- The planning framework should be simplified to avoid confusion and duplication, taking account of the Local Government in Scotland Act (2003). Young people should be enabled to take an active and equal part in this process.
- Robust and innovative methods should be developed, with the full involvement of young people to improve the gathering of information on their needs.
- Local authorities should fully engage with young people on developing structures for youth plans which they can more readily understand.