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Education

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Lear

Summary Report of Responses

To the Consultation on

Proposals for the Future of the Youth Council



INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Public consultation on proposals for the future of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (hereafter “the Youth Council”) was launched on 20 April 2015. The original deadline for responses was 12 June. Following representation from stakeholders the consultation period was extended until 3 July.
- 1.2 The consultation document can be found on the Department of Education (hereafter “the Department”) website at:
<http://www.deni.gov.uk/content-newpage-20>
- 1.3 This document provides a summary of the responses to the consultation.
- 1.4 The Department would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took the time to consider and respond to these proposals.

RESPONSES RECEIVED

2.1 The Department received a total of 50 responses to the consultation. A list of all those who responded is attached at Annex A. Table 1 below shows a breakdown of respondents by category.

Table 1: Respondent Profile

Respondent Type	Number of responses
Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation	20
Other	8
Uniformed Youth Organisation	5
Trade Union	4
Government Department or Government Body	4
Local Council	3
University or College	3
Irish-medium Group	3
Total	50

2.2 Three responses represented the views of one organisation and have therefore been considered as one response in the analysis.

2.3 The majority of responses received (58%) were from organisations (or members of organisations) currently funded directly or indirectly by the Youth Council.

2.4 In addition to the formal public consultation, the Minister for Education met to discuss issues around the consultation proposals with representatives from the following organisations, who also provided formal responses:

- The Youth Council (17 June);
- Youthnet (8 July); and
- Youth Action (2 September).

- 2.5 Although the consultation document set out a list of questions to assist the consultation process, it should be noted that not all respondents answered every question and many respondents chose to provide a narrative rather than answer the questions asked. All comments were individually analysed.
- 2.6 In relation to qualitative data, the analysis involved grouping comments into common themes. The most common themes are set out in this document, with selected individual comments reported to illustrate the range of views received.
- 2.7 This document is intended to be a summary of the responses. It does not cover in detail the full range of feedback and so not every issue is included.
- 2.8 Every effort has been taken to ensure that the views of the respondents have been reflected accurately throughout this document.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

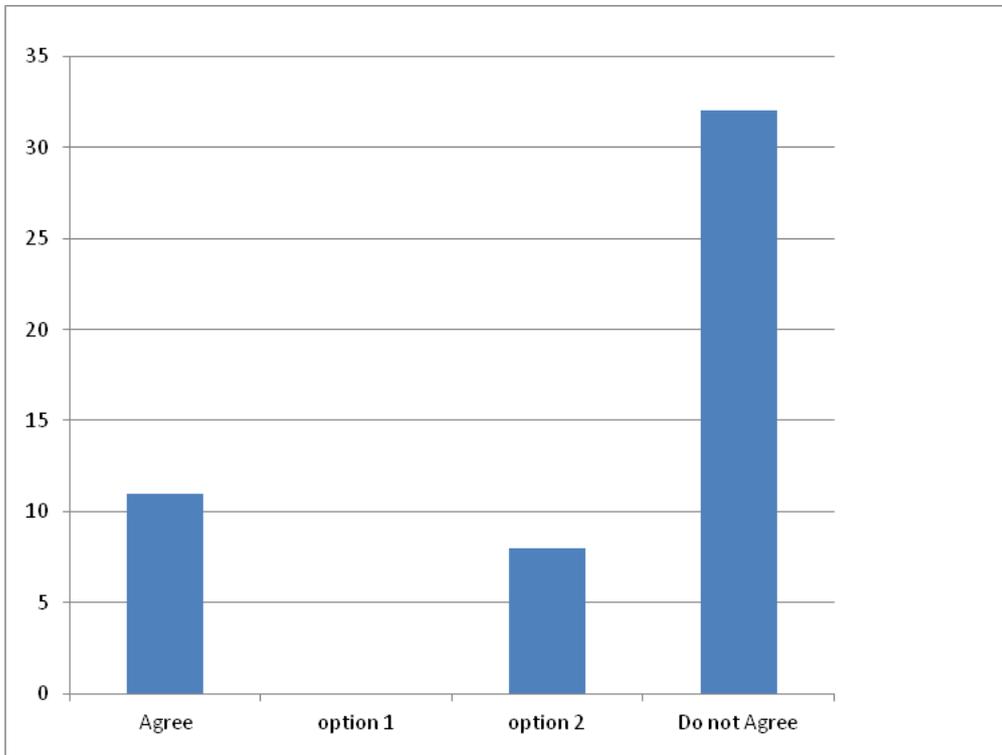
3.1 This section summarises the responses to each question in turn. Statistics quoted are based on the actual number of responses to each individual question rather than the overall number of respondents.

Q1. Do you agree that the creation of the Education Authority combined with the current budgetary constraints provides a need to rationalise the administration of regional and sub-regional youth services?

If you support the delivery of regional and sub regional youth services in the Education Authority, please specify the option that you think will achieve the desired effect.

- **Option 1** – Dissolution of the Youth Council. (Repeal of The Youth Service (NI) Order 1989) The creation of the Education Authority enables the delivery of a single regional youth service. This option provides the opportunity for minimising the duplication of regional and sub regional youth services so that the maximum proportion of available grant funding is allocated to front line youth services whilst complementing the consistency and quality of the service provided. As a single provider the Education Authority will ensure consistency in the delivery of youth services. The Education Authority's functions do not require any legislative amendments in order to administer regional youth services.
- **Option 2** – Dissolution of the Youth Council (Repeal of The Youth Service (NI) Order 1989) and protection of youth provision within the Education Authority. This option builds on Option 1 as it proposed that youth provision within the Education Authority is protected through the development of:
 - specific targets relating to youth provision set by the Minister and monitored by the Department;
 - management/monitoring of the Education Authority youth budget to ensure it underpins these targets;
 - greater flexibility in the allocation of resources, regionally and sub regionally;

- particular consideration given to the funding of Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations;
- designated staff for youth services within the Education Authority; and
- scope for strategic/higher level projects to be identified as part of the Regional Youth Development Plan preparation process, which will guide and support the delivery of services by the Education Authority.



Agree	Agree: option 1	Agree: option 2	Do not Agree	Total Responses
11	0	8	32	43

3.2 74% of respondents to question 1 did not agree that the creation of the Education Authority combined with the current budgetary constraints provided a need to rationalise the administration of regional and sub-regional youth services. 26% of those who responded to question 1 agreed with the question.

None of the respondents supported option 1 (dissolution of the Youth Council) and, of those that agreed with question 1, 73% supported option 2 (dissolution of the Youth Council and protection of youth provision within the Education Authority).

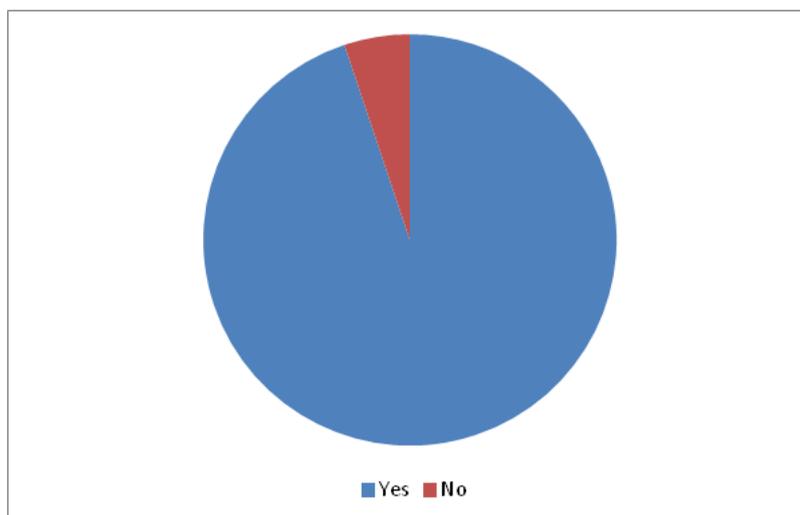
3.3 The recurring themes identified in the qualitative analysis of the responses to question 1 were as follows:

- i. Many respondents thought that the options were limited and further details were required;
- ii. There was a lack of confidence in the Education Authority's ability to engage with or understand the work of Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations, particularly in relation to infrastructure funding and leverage;
- iii. There were concerns about the loss of Youth Council expertise and jobs within the Youth Council and the wider youth sector;
- iv. There were concerns about the loss of resources/funding, training and rationalisation for Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations and volunteers;
- v. Some respondents thought that the regional assessment of need process should be completed first to allow time for the role of the Education Authority to become clearer;
- vi. There were concerns about the timing of the review and that any changes to the Youth Council and/or funding to Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations are ill advised alongside a major period of change within the Education Authority;
- vii. Some respondents had concerns that the Education Authority was in a transfer and transform phase and does not have the capacity to undertake Youth Council functions and that this would lead to a less effective service for Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations; and
- viii. Some respondents thought that the role and functions of the Youth Council had been misunderstood.

3.4 Question 1 asked respondents, if they did not support the delivery of regional youth services in the Education Authority, to offer thoughts on any possible alternative models. The three most common alternative models identified in the qualitative analysis of the responses were as follows:-

- i. Maintain the status quo, but reform the Youth Council to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness;
- ii. An independent body outside the Education Authority to act as a broker/ conduit between voluntary, statutory and community sectors; and
- iii. A dedicated unit to sit within the Education Authority for Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations.

Q2. Are there any services provided by the Youth Council which you consider must be retained by the Education Authority?



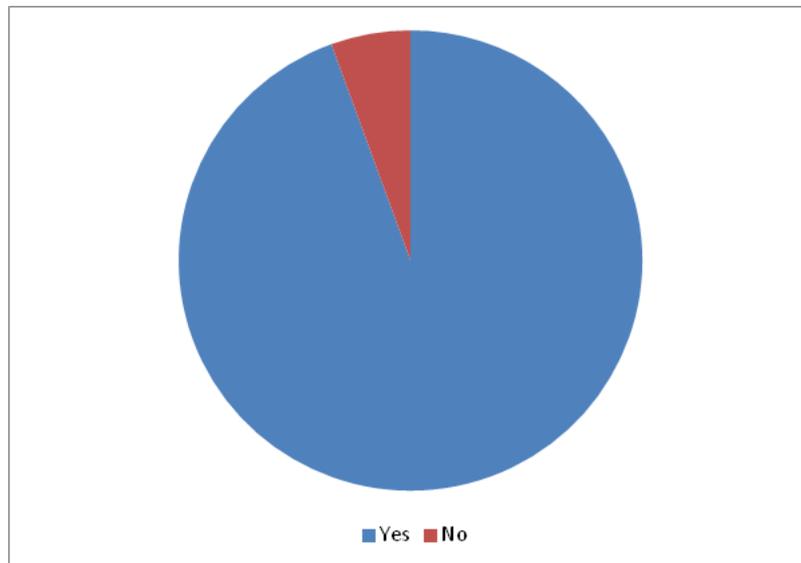
Yes	No	Total responses
37	2	39

3.5 Many respondents to question 2 highlighted services currently provided by the Youth Council which they considered must be retained by the Education Authority. The main services identified in the qualitative analysis of the responses to this question were as follows:

- i. Strategic development/support/delivery and a voice for Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations;
- ii. Training role, including Youth Work Training Board, accredited training, bursaries and workforce development;
- iii. Funding for regional services, including funding to Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations, through assessment of need;
- iv. International and European work and support for Erasmus+;
- v. Support for Community Relations Equality and Diversity;

- vi. Infrastructure funding for organisations, including uniformed youth organisations;
- vii. North South cooperation, including through the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work; and
- viii. Support for targeted youth work.

Q3. Do you consider that the dissolution of the Youth Council would have an adverse impact on regional youth services?



Yes	No	Total responses
34	2	36

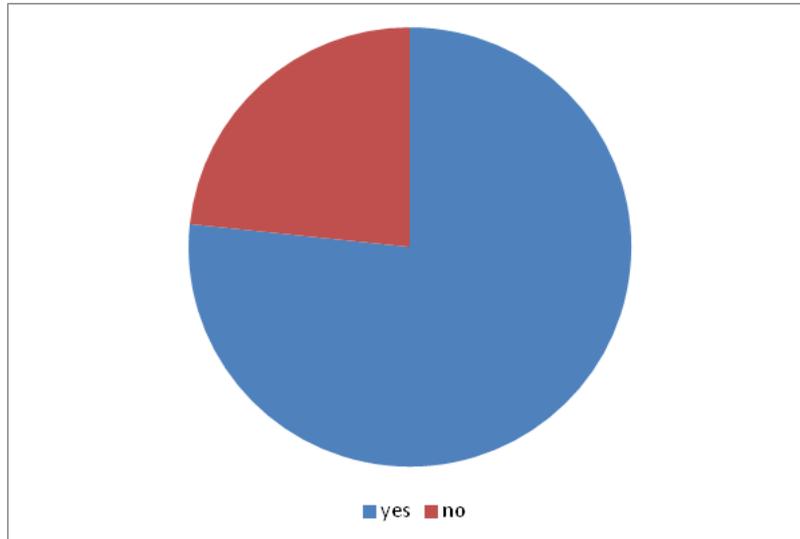
3.6 Of those who responded to Question 3, 94% considered that the dissolution of the Youth Council would have an adverse impact on regional youth services.

3.7 The effects on regional services identified in the qualitative analysis of the responses to this question were as follows:

- i. The loss of Youth Council expertise;
- ii. Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations would lose statutory protection;
- iii. The loss of Youth Council championing, representing and providing an independent voice for Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations;
- iv. The Education Authority is not equipped to deal with regional youth functions;

- v. A loss or reduction of funding for Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations;
- vi. The loss of Youth Council support for workforce development;
- vii. The loss of an “investment funding model for Regional Voluntary Organisations” and their ability to leverage in additional resources; and
- viii. Reduced support to volunteers and paid workers.

Q4. Do you consider that the options identified adversely impact on any of the Section 75 groups?



Yes	No	Total respondents
23	7	30

- 3.8 Of those who responded to Question 4, 76% thought that the options identified would have an adverse impact on Section 75 groups.
- 3.9 The final proposals will be screened for Equality Impact Assessment, Human Rights Implications and Rural Proofing.

KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE CONSULTATION

- 4.1 This section focuses primarily on the key themes which emerged from the qualitative analysis of the narrative comments received from all respondents. Every response was analysed. Not all respondents chose to complete the additional comments field provided in the questionnaire. However, where respondents did so these were categorised and grouped under a variety of themes. There was a variety of comments made on every aspect of the consultation. The diversity of responses has made it impractical to report on them all. Common themes and concerns have emerged and these are reflected below.
- 4.2 The consultation document was welcomed as a timely review reflecting the fact that time has moved on. It acknowledged the fact that we are operating in a different context in terms of education priorities, Priorities for Youth, the Education Authority and within the current constrained budgets. There were comments such as “the Youth Council, its statutory functions and the legislation which created it are outdated and require modernisation”; “there is a need to streamline costs”; “to reduce administration costs ... and reinvest in voluntary youth sector support and delivery”; “the funding policy for regional youth services is not in line with Priorities for Youth” and with the creation of the Education Authority there is a “need for consistency” and “to eliminate duplication” “ the biggest losers are the most disadvantaged young people”.
- 4.3 Concerns were raised that the repeal of the Youth Services (NI) Order 1989 removes the legislative basis for funding Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations and there were questions about the ability of the Education Authority to carry out these duties if there is no equivalent legislative cover within the Education Bill.
- 4.4 Concerns were raised about the Education Authority’s perceived limited knowledge and experience of regional or strategic project funding for youth services engaged through Regional Voluntary Organisations.
- 4.5 Concerns were also raised that what is perceived as an overly bureaucratic micro management approach applied by the Education Authority to local groups would be replicated with Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations. It was felt that this would lead to increased bureaucracy for already overworked volunteers. Many respondents also thought that this system would have

a negative impact on the “investment funding model of Regional Voluntary Organisations” and their ability to leverage in additional resources “to increase resources for youth services that ultimately increases targeted delivery to young people”.

- 4.6 Equally, there were concerns raised about the level of governance and accountability within the Youth Council citing that it is a “haven for risk takers”; “out of kilter with DE priorities” and that “a value for money review of all 37 organisations funded by the Youth Council is required”.
- 4.7 Concerns were raised that the rationalisation of the administration of youth services would have a detrimental effect on future funding, leading to a reduction in the level of funding available for Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations.
- 4.8 The ongoing work of the Regional Advisory Group and the implementation of the Regional Youth Development Plan was seen as a critical time of engagement for the youth sector within a significant period of change, with many asking that the decision regarding the future of the Youth Council be deferred pending the completion of this work and that any changes should be phased in.
- 4.9 Concerns were raised about the loss of expertise and reduction in jobs within the Youth Council and the wider youth sector.
- 4.10 Some respondents held a view that it is the Department’s policy regarding the provision of regional youth services which is being reviewed, rather than the administrative structures which support it.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Enquiries about this document should be directed to

By post: Youth & Schools in the Community Team
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BT19 7PR

By email: Youth.service@deni.gov.uk

This report is available on the Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk Other formats can be produced on request.

ANNEX A

LIST OF RESPONDENTS TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Cara-Friend

Catholic Guides of Ireland

Clubs for Young People

Community Relations Council

Connect Cymru

Conradh na Gaeilge

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Disability Action

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Education and Training Standards Wales

Foras na Gaeilge

Fóram na nÓg

Girl Guiding Ulster

Include Youth

Mencap

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

NILGOSC

NIPSA

North/South Education and Training Standards Committee

Northern Ireland Youth Forum

NUS-USI NI Students

Open College Network NI

Playboard

Public Achievement

Scouting Ireland

Start 360

The Boys Brigade

The Bytes Project

The Girls Brigade

The Princes Trust

The Youth Council for Northern Ireland

UKIP

Ulster Teacher's Union

Ulster University Community Youth Work

UNITE

Volunteer Now

Wheelworks

Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster

Young Men's Christian Association

Youth Initiatives

Youth Work Training Board

YouthAction

Youthlink

Youthnet

Four responses were also received from individuals.



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