

Report of a Pilot Inspection  
Resurgam Youth Initiative

May 2024

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Resurgam Youth Initiative is located in the Old Warren area of Lisburn and is a community based, voluntary youth provision, which has satellite youth projects operating in Hillhall, Hilden, Maze and more recently the Ballymacash area of Lisburn. The Resurgam 3D Youth Centre, which operates as a hub for the youth work activity across the satellite projects was officially opened in 2017.

Resurgam Youth Initiative is a member group of the Resurgam Trust (the Trust) which is a community owned and led organisation in the City of Lisburn. Resurgam Youth Initiative benefits from the expertise and support of the Trust in key areas including governance and human resources, as well as links to a wide range of support programmes and initiatives, such as the Lisburn Early Intervention Partnership and the Healthy Living Centre. Resurgam Youth Initiative uses a bespoke Community Youth Model which was developed by the Trust to address the needs of the young people across the Lisburn city area.

Resurgam Youth Initiative works with young people aged from 5 to 25 years from a range of community backgrounds. The membership has increased by more than 30% over the last four years and is currently 736 young people.

The staff across the five locations has two full-time youth workers, 24 part-time youth workers and 11 volunteers. The centre is open five evenings each week, as well as two afternoons, with provision on Sundays for young people with additional needs.

The key areas of need identified by the young people and the centre staff include: mental health and physical activity, personal and social development; and the active participation of young people in roles which enable them to contribute as active citizens in their local community, such as their participation on the Trust Board of Directors.

Resurgam Youth Initiative is an accredited centre for the Open College Network\* (OCN) and delivers relevant youth work qualifications to young people and adults.

*Throughout the report, where text is accompanied by an asterisk, this indicates that additional information can be found in Appendix 2: Notes.*

## **B. VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE, PARENTS AND STAFF**

During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with five focus groups of young people. The junior members spoke positively about the kind, helpful staff who help make their activities fun. They reported that their views are considered regarding the purchase of new equipment and in the planning for future programmes. The senior members commented on their development of new skills and greater self-confidence. They value opportunities to take responsibility for activities and events, for example the celebration prom event, and volunteering as leaders.

Inspectors also met with 11 parents/carers whose children attend the five satellite projects visited during the inspection. The parents appreciate the range of suitable programmes provided for their children throughout the year, including trips, special celebration events and the summer scheme, which was particularly valued by those living in the rural areas around Lisburn. They spoke warmly of the commitment of the staff to forging strong, open relationships with their children which are characterised by mutual trust and respect. The parents/carers of young people with additional physical, learning, emotional and behavioural needs strongly commended the staff's sensitive and informed support, which enables their children to engage in the programmes and to integrate well with their peers. They confirmed that they are confident in the safeguarding arrangements and that their children are safe and secure in Resurgam Youth Initiative.

In discussions with the staff throughout the inspection, they confirmed their appreciation of being part of the Resurgam team. They feel well supported by the management who provide mentoring, help them develop their skills and gain the required experience and qualifications to progress in leadership. As members of the local community, the staff recognise the value and contribution they make to the personal and social development of the young people and how this helps support the broader community development of the area in which they live.

### **C. THE PROCESS OF INSPECTION**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) worked alongside Resurgam Youth Initiative staff to consider how well the centre:

- has identified and articulates its vision;
- prioritises actions to achieve the vision;
- overcomes the main challenges it faces;
- monitors and reviews progression to identify, celebrate and embed success; and
- grows and develops an inclusive community of learning.

## **2. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

- The inclusive and empowering vision for Resurgam Youth Initiative has been designed with the young people, is shared by all stakeholders and informs all aspects of the provision.
- The community development work of The Resurgam Trust is closely aligned with and effectively supports the youth work provision within the Resurgam Youth Initiative and is impacting positively on the outcomes for the young people.
- The Resurgam Youth Initiative has established very effective partnerships across a wide range of youth, community and statutory organisations which are having a positive impact on the young people.

- The long-standing community relations work with the young people and staff is helping to build positive relationships and sustain stability across the local community.
- The young people's empowerment and involvement at all levels of decision-making within the Resurgam Youth Initiative are having a beneficial impact on their personal and social development and effecting improvement across the wider organisation.
- The appropriate pathways into youth work leadership are progressing the young people into staff roles, where they are working in voluntary and paid positions.
- The young people are developing a range of skills and qualities through their engagement in programmes bespoke to their needs, interests, and abilities; they are confidently and competently organising programmes and advocating successfully on behalf of themselves and others.
- Young people with additional needs are nurtured and empowered to overcome personal barriers and engage fully in the programmes, enjoying friendships with their peers.
- The curriculum and staff training are well planned and reflect the 'Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice', with an appropriate focus on holistic development, particularly the mental health and wellbeing of the young people.
- The provision includes a range of well-planned, innovative programmes and approaches, which are matched closely to the young people's needs and aspirations, informed by appropriate research, and supported by external professionals.
- The staff demonstrate high levels of interpersonal skills and are sensitive and responsive in all their interactions with the young people.

Area for further consideration:

- The staff have identified appropriately the need to develop further the provision of a wider range of extension activities for a small number of the junior sessions, which will sustain the young people's engagement and interest to the end of each session.

### **3. MAIN REPORT**

#### **A. SETTING THE VISION**

Resurgam Youth Initiative's vision, designed through a process of consultation with young people, staff and stakeholders is: "Our young people are engaged and motivated to achieve their full potential as individuals and citizens." The staff's work with young people is guided by appropriate values, such as the high levels of inclusion of young people from different communities and young people with additional needs. There is an open, respectful ethos, where young people feel safe to share their views.



The young people have a strong sense of belonging to the centre and understand and appreciate the impact that the work of Resurgam Youth Initiative has on their personal and social development. The young people take active roles in leadership and are involved in decision-making within Resurgam Youth Initiative; they have appropriate pathways from membership through to volunteering and into leadership roles. The young people talk of the youth provision as an important and influential part of their lives and the staff recognise, understand and value the nurturing aspects of their work.

Resurgam Youth Initiative Management Committee has a breadth of expertise across the areas of community development and youth work. They are supportive of the staff and understand well the issues facing young people and their families. The active participation and empowerment of young people is an appropriate focus throughout this youth organisation, as the leadership and management understand well the benefits to their local community of young people playing an active and genuine role in leadership and decision-making that will affect them and their peers in the future. The empathy, knowledge and understanding of the leadership of this youth provision is evident in their effective advocacy, both with and for, the young people. At all levels, there is an appropriate emphasis on empowering the young people to influence decisions and engage in issues which affect them. The inclusive and empowering ethos of the organisation is embedded into every aspect of its youth work.

The young people work alongside their youth workers to address their own needs and support others in need; for example, the young people's involvement in extensive social action projects and charitable work. The young people are keen to work on behalf of their peers, younger members and others in their wider community who require support. High levels of collaboration within the organisation and with other organisations provides access to a broad range of support services and more opportunities for the young people.

## **B. IMPLEMENTING AND IMPROVING TO ACHIEVE THE VISION**

Staff surveys and feedback from the young people inform the priorities for the programmes provided and affirm the effective youth work practice which the staff, management and young people articulate with pride and confidence. The young people's views and evaluations inform the bespoke curriculum which is effectively meeting their needs and interests. The quality of the youth work practice is highly effective. The staff demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and their empathy, knowledge and care for the young people was evident in all their interactions during the inspection. Most of the staff have progressed from being young people attending the provision and they are now excellent role models for the current membership.

The holistic development of the young people is central to the planning and delivery of the youth work curriculum. The young people are progressing in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding, acquiring a range of life skills and enjoying their youth work experiences. The curriculum has an appropriate focus on building relationships among the young people, and in forging new friendships. The work

with young people with additional needs is sensitive and well integrated into the programmes. Young people, regardless of their background or ability, are welcomed and included by all of the staff and their peers. This respectful inclusion is cited by the young people as contributing to their feeling safe, protected and included in the settings.

In their group discussions and informal groupwork, all of the young people are respectful to one another and are debating and learning new skills together with their peers and the staff. The young people develop further their digital skills through programmes in photography and computer gaming. Through Outreach Youth Work approaches, the twice-yearly gaming programmes are engaging successfully new members.

The extensive training completed by the staff benefits the young people and is evident in the group facilitation. The ethos of being engaged, motivated and improving, both individually and collectively, permeates the work with the young people, the governance of the organisation and how external stakeholders view the work of Resurgam Youth Initiative.

There is an appropriate focus on programmes which support and enhance the emotional health and wellbeing of the young people. For example, 'The Connected Kids Mindfulness' eight-week programme is impacting positively on the young people's emotional wellbeing, by helping them transition from primary to post-primary school and is teaching them coping strategies to reduce anxiety and stress. Similarly, those engaged in the Connected Minds Committee of young people aged 14-25 years, are mature and self-aware. They know that their voice is listened to, that they influence the development of Resurgam Youth Initiative work through sharing their ideas and that, by doing so, they have a meaningful impact in their community.

Two of the staff are Mental Health Champions and, in addition, a small number of the staff and young people are Mental Health Ambassadors. In these roles they receive extensive training, clinical supervision and benefit from a network of mental health support.

## **C. BUILDING EQUITY**

Inclusion and equality are central to the provision at Resurgam Youth Initiative. The young people come from different faith backgrounds and from a range of different school types, and all report that they feel accepted in their youth centres. Importantly, Resurgam Youth Initiative's active support for cross-community relations is longstanding and valued by stakeholders from all sections of the community. Ongoing partnerships with, for example, Colin Youth Development Centre in West Belfast and the County Cork Meitheal Mara Project\* have enabled the young people to talk about their own cultures and sustain lasting friendships. More locally, the 'Living Library' project has enabled the young people to meet and debate with political activists in the Northern Ireland conflict who are now working together and contributing to peacebuilding. Additionally, the 'Beyond Borders' good relations programme, which was very well attended, gave the young people an interest in understanding the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Resurgam Youth Initiative developed further its work to promote inclusion by establishing both junior and senior LGBTQIA+ groups which are having a positive impact on the young people's confidence and self-esteem. Through this work, the young people participated for the first time at the Belfast Pride event. A new working partnership has also been forged with the Black and Minority Ethnic Group in Lisburn.

The staff respond sensitively to young people with additional learning, physical and emotional needs. They take time to learn about and understand the conditions affecting the young people and make appropriate adjustments in the provision to help them engage fully in the programmes. Through gentle and flexible approaches, the staff are building mutually trusting relationships which enable anxious young people to settle well and socialise with their peers. In discussions with inspectors, the parents/carers reported how much their children have benefited from feeling supported and accepted by all in their youth programmes. For example, the weekly junior and senior 'Baked Beans' programme is designed specifically to support young people who have special educational needs and is welcomed by parents/carers who recognise its positive impact on their children's independent and social development. Across the provision, young people with additional needs are nurtured and empowered to overcome personal barriers and engage fully in the youth work experiences.

The staff and management face funding challenges for important aspects of the provision, notably resourcing a much needed summer programme of activities for the young people and the provision of detached and outreach youth work. In response, the staff are trying to access funding for a range of programmes; and for their part, the young people are also raising funds and, in some cases, contributing towards buying resources and equipment.

The voluntary contribution of their time by staff on weekdays and at weekends is significant and essential to support the programmes provided for the young people. Inspectors noted that staff assisted voluntarily, attending additional sessions, during the week of the inspection to support their colleagues.

#### **D. EMBEDDING SUCCESS**

Resurgam Youth Initiative is highly effective in celebrating and embedding their successful youth work across the Lisburn City area. The staff and management are well respected across the local community and by their young people. The young people, parents and staff give and receive regular feedback on how effectively the young people's needs are being met. Resurgam Youth Initiative works successfully with families in the community who say that their involvement with Resurgam Youth Initiative is of immense benefit to their children and also impacts positively on family life. Parents talked of how their children were developing further their independence, self-regulating better their behaviours and bonding better with their siblings; they gave examples of supportive practices, such as staff changing opening times to suit families and walking children home in high visibility vests.



Success is recognised and celebrated in many ways, for example: certificates are awarded for completion of education programmes such as Health, Wellbeing and Reflexology by the Young Women's Group. Photographs of the young people's achievements are on display in the centre, as well as shared appropriately on social media.

A key feature of the efficacy of Resurgam Youth Initiative's work with young people is the value the staff place on listening to the young people and how they shape their future services and funding applications to the young people's needs. The staff take time to get to know the interests, skills, talents and aspirations of the individual young people: as a result, the provision offered is clearly determined with input and direction from the young people. All of the work with young people is embedded in community development principles which benefit young people, their families and the wider community. This holistic approach contributes to young people experiencing a sense of belonging, feeling well supported and being hopeful about the future.

Resurgam Youth Initiative enables young people to experience success and gain public recognition for their achievements. For example, the sessions with a professional photographer culminated in young people exhibiting their work at a prestigious exhibition in Belfast. The young people plan and organise their own celebration events. The young people in the Connected Minds Committee demonstrate highly effective teamwork and organisational skills by leading public events such as their 'Under the Stars Prom Night' which they offer to all 11 to 16-year-olds in the community, including non-members. Similarly, the Quiz Night and Games and Social Night for younger members were designed and led by the young people; as a consequence, they are developing useful employability skills, talents and capabilities, which enhance further their self-confidence and self-worth.

The young people are learning financial skills, for example, through their participation in the Resurgam Youth Bank; they understand the significant impact they make through their charitable support for others. In addition to organising successful events to support other young people in their community, the young people also demonstrate social responsibility, compassion and generosity towards individuals of all ages facing personal challenges. Through fund-raising examples which they discussed passionately with the ETI, they are supporting a UK-based suicide awareness charity. The young people in the Connected Minds Committee sought assurance from the charity that the funds raised would be spent in Northern Ireland. Locally, the young people in the Young Women's group also raised funds to improve the garden at a residential home for the elderly and a celebration event was held in the home in appreciation of the young people's support.

## **E. GROWING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING**

Professional learning is prioritised appropriately for the staff and is having a positive impact on the knowledge, confidence and skills of the staff and the young people. It is linked strategically to the needs and interests of the young people and is highly valued by all. The Level 2 OCN NI qualification in Youth Work Practice is currently being taken by 16 volunteers and contributes effectively to their educational

achievements, providing a pathway to further youth work qualifications. Similarly, the staff and volunteers report that they found the National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in community justice extremely beneficial in their work with young people. There is a culture of sharing this professional learning amongst the staff and volunteers, leading to positive strategies being used consistently across the centres which develop the young people's self-esteem and resilience.

The bespoke Resurgam Community Youth Model, which guides the excellent collaborative strategic planning and work of Resurgam Youth Initiative, Early Intervention Lisburn and the Healthy Living Centre, is highly beneficial for sharing information and supporting holistically the young people. The sharing of knowledge and expertise help the staff to meet more holistically the young people's needs and avoids duplication. In addition, the quick referrals to external agencies provide the young people with much needed support at the earliest opportunity. The leaders of Resurgam Youth Initiative and Early Intervention Lisburn are pro-active in sourcing training programmes which take account of the young people's suggestions, interests and needs. For example, the youth workers, parents and young people are benefitting from the training in the 'Help Kids Talk Speech and Language' programme by developing and improving their communication, social skills, confidence and improved emotional wellbeing. By parents using the strategies at home and youth workers using them in their programmes, there is a consistent approach which is benefiting the young people.

Potential young leaders are encouraged from a young age to develop their leadership skills. Resurgam Youth Initiative has created an internal youth work model for empowering young people called 'Pathway of Development' which enables a significant number of young people to take on leadership roles as volunteers and youth workers. In addition, the 'Empowering Youth Student Wellbeing Programme', written by a young staff member, is currently being trialled in two local post-primary schools.

A Community Academy was created six years ago with the Resurgam and Fermanagh Trust to develop a collaborative approach to share information, knowledge, good practice and to reflect on what did not work so well. The staff and management report this is very beneficial in bringing new ideas and activities to try at the centres, to which the young people are responding well.

Through the highly effective partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Resurgam Youth Initiative is helping to break down barriers and preconceptions within the community. The young people are benefitting from discussions facilitated by the youth workers and the police about vaping, online safety, bullying and drugs.

The Resurgam Outreach Workers provide a support network to young people who may not be aware of existing youth provision in their area on Friday evenings. The Outreach Workers encourage the young people to attend the youth provision centres to participate in youth work programmes. This engages new young people in the provision and reaches out to young people not yet engaging with the youth service.

## **F. CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTION**

At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by Resurgam Youth Initiative demonstrates that the arrangements for child and adult protection take full account of current legislation, policy and guidance. The young people and parents report that the staff prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all participants. They know what to do and who to approach if they need to report a concern.

## **4. GOING FORWARD**

Resurgam Youth Initiative, as a well-established community based, voluntary youth provision, provides innovative, high-quality programmes which enrich the lives of young people in the Lisburn City area. The ETI will continue to work with the Resurgam Youth Initiative, including to share examples of the highly effective practice from which others may learn.

The aspects of highly effective practice which should be shared more widely include:

- the synergy between the community development work of the Resurgam Trust and the youth provision in Resurgam Youth Initiative, which is responsive to the needs, interests and abilities of young people in the Lisburn area;
- the practical and consistent focus on building good community relations, based on developing the young people's understanding of different cultures;
- the involvement of young people at every stage of decision-making about their programmes;
- the integration of young people with additional needs in the youth work programmes and the establishment of bespoke provision in response to the wishes of parents/carers; and
- the well-planned curriculum and staff training which reflect the Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice and which focus appropriately on the holistic development, particularly the mental health and wellbeing, of the young people.

Resurgam Youth Initiative is well placed to take forward the area for further consideration detailed in this report.

## 5. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: QUANTITATIVE TERMS

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

## **APPENDIX 2: NOTES**

### **Page 1      Open College Network (OCN)\***

The Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI) is a UK recognised Awarding Organisation based in Northern Ireland. It is regulated by CCEA Regulation to develop and award regulated professional and technical (vocational) qualifications from Entry Level up to and including Level 5 across all sector areas. In addition, OCN NI is also regulated by Ofqual to award similar qualifications in England.

### **Page 5      County Cork Meitheal Mara Project\***

Founded in 1993, Meitheal Mara is a community boatyard in the heart of Cork City, a registered charity and training centre. Training is tailored to suit needs and abilities including, developing personal and social development, teamwork and responsibility, through a variety of programmes. Meitheal Mara works closely with other local youth, education and community organisations to achieve positive outcomes.



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