

Funding

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Context:

Youth Work now has a statutory framework. However, adequate financial resources have not yet been put in place to guarantee consistent and substantial funding. As a result Clare Youth Service is frequently constrained in its capacity to deliver much needed services.

Goal:

To secure consistent and substantial funding for identified youth work needs in the county.

Objectives:

- Identify any expected financial deficit annually, and devise a plan to address this.
- Play an active role in lobbying for more secure and sufficient funding for youth work, both locally and nationally.

Infrastructure and Capital Programme

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Context:

Clare Youth Service has grown extensively from its beginnings in 1969 to what it is today a leader in the field of youth work in Co. Clare and beyond. For the organisation to continue to grow and develop it is necessary to examine the need for further capital, infrastructural and human resources.

Goal:

To identify the key issues, in the areas of personnel, capital and buildings over the next 5-10 years.

Objectives:

- Establish a working group to examine the changing needs of young people and the broader context in which Clare Youth Service operates.
- Review our existing resources in the light of future needs.
- Clarify the financial consequences of 1 & 2.

Policy and Quality Standards

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Context:

One of the goals of the National Youth Work Development Plan is to “put in place mechanisms for enhancing professionalism and ensuring quality standards in youth work” Clare Youth Service believes that the development of standards of youth service delivery is a significant step in ensuring that youth work services are of the highest quality for young people.

Goal:

Clare Youth Service will ensure that written policies relevant to our work continue to be developed and implemented and that we work to attain the Quality mark in youth service provision.

Objectives:

- A policy task group with responsibility for policy development will be established.
- A Quality Assessment task group with responsibility for the Quality Assessment Process will be established.
- Awareness of existing policies will be raised through a Policy Pack to be developed for all staff and volunteers of the service. This pack will be up-dated when necessary.

The priorities of this strategic plan are the result of inclusive and comprehensive consultation with all the various strands of the organisation. The Strategic plan is a process rather than an end in itself and this process is important in order to develop a real sense of ownership and commitment to the plan.

The implementation and review of the plan will involve:

- The preparation and implementation of an operational plan for each priority area
- The provision of necessary resources for the achievements of targets
- The establishment of the following groups:
 - Research and Development Group
 - Policy Task Group
 - Quality Assessment Task Group
 - Infrastructure and Capital programme Task Group.
- A comprehensive review on an annual basis.
- The on-going review of the plan's implementation will be built on the principle of inclusion and consultation. It is in this spirit of co-operation that we look forward to the challenges over the coming three years of youth work in Co. Clare.



A Thought

The business of encouraging young people to make something of their lives in terms of skills, cultural expression, and the appreciation of the world around them is more urgent than most workers seem to realise. There seems to be a deep emotional need for adventure and new experience, and unless we are crumbling at the edges of our experience we seem to harbour a discontent, which can turn to destructiveness.

It is paradoxical that those whose need for new experience is restless and unsatisfied are often the very people who have so little capacity to undertake activities that would give them satisfaction. Just as there is a skill in making relationships, so there is a skill of daring to cross new frontiers and of giving ourselves to persistent effort.

The meaning of “boredom” is surely that we are not moving to fresh experience and stimulus, but the quality of boredom attaches to the individual rather than the situation - those who declare themselves bored have often a world of adventure open to them. Of two people faced by the same situation, one may find himself bored whilst the other is alive to interesting events at every turn.

This is not a matter we can cope with merely by “teaching particular skills”, for as long as we prolong people's dependence upon us we fail them in their preparation to pursue their own interesting lives. “Training for leisure” is something much more subtle than showing people how to do things.

People who have personal resource and resilience, who know how to apply themselves diligently (which is not the same thing as obeying instructions) will probably find plenty of things to do. Our job therefore is to feed young people's curiosity, and their self-reliance in making discoveries.

This does not mean that they can do without our help, but we should be working more often as adult advisers to largely autonomous societies of interested people, than as “teachers” in the traditional sense. It is just as important that this should be understood in school as in youth organisations.

L. Button

Clare Youth Service Strategic Plan 2006 - 2008

Mission Statement

Clare Youth Service works to enable young people in Co. Clare develop to their full potential through the co-operative work of trained volunteers and dedicated professional staff.

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Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce Clare Youth Service Strategic Plan 2006 to 2008, which is the result of extensive consultation among the various strands of the organisation including young people, volunteers and staff, management team and board of directors. External agencies were also consulted.



The Plan highlights the areas of priority that we as a service will address within the next three years. It is designed to develop our work with young people in the context of the Youth Work Act (2001) and the National Youth Work Development Plan (2003-2007). This statutory basis is an important landmark in the development of youth provision. However, adequate funding to implement the Act has not yet been made available and this despite living in one of the ten richest countries in the world.

We live in a time of great uncertainty for young people and as a society we must not renege on our responsibility to them. We as an organisation will continue to work actively in the pursuit of our policies and in addressing the inadequate funding of youth work by our society.

We approach this new Strategic Plan at a very positive time for Clare Youth Service and are greatly encouraged by developments within the service during the past three years which are a direct result of young people taking their own initiatives and following them through to conclusion. It is this enterprise of our youth that drives us as a service and will continue to do so.

Mary Cashin Chairperson

Context

This is the first Strategic Plan drawn up by Clare Youth Service since the enactment of the Youth Work Act 2001 and the publication of the National Youth Work Development Plan 2003-2007.

Our Strategic Plan maps the way forward for the organisation for the next three years and is guided by current national policy in Youth Work. Youth Work for the first time ever now has a statutory footing and is defined in the Act as “a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is:

- complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training
- provided primarily by voluntary youth organisations”

Clarifying the values that underpin the work we do was an important part of the work in drawing up this plan. Youth work inspired by values such as respect, openness, co-operation and participation, provides a powerful learning experience for young people. Through the commitment of paid and voluntary workers young people all over the county are supported to define and create spaces that are distinctly their own and at the same time rooted in their communities.

Youth work plays a positive role in demonstrating that reflective and critical participation is essential in the creation and development of a just society. It cannot be the panacea for all the ills and difficulties of young people and society. Youth work recognises the value of each person, emphasises their social nature and provides an important service to society.

The priorities set out in this strategic plan, map the way forward for Clare Youth Service. Our plan is more a process than an event, a journey rather than a destination. The journey over the next three years will see Clare Youth Service continue to develop youth work within the county and enable young people through their voluntary and co-operative involvement, enhance their social and personal development.



Priority Areas

The following 8 areas have been set out as those on which Clare Youth Service will concentrate in the coming three years:

1. Programme Development

2. Public Relations

3. Volunteers

4. Partnerships and Alliances

5. Training and Development

6. Funding

7. Infrastructure and Capital Programme

8. Policy and Quality Standards

Programme Development: 1

Context:

A major challenge to Clare Youth Service is to provide innovative and effective programmes to young people in light of their changing needs and that of the society in which they live. Our programmes need to take account of the changing demographics of the county, cultural diversity, the physical and social isolation of some of our target group, the need to recognise the spiritual dimension of the person and the blurring between stages of development from childhood, to youth to adulthood.

Goal:

To provide an innovative, effective service to young people, enabling them to have real and meaningful experiences, shaping elements of their lives.

Objectives:

- Clare Youth Service will provide proactive and innovative opportunities and services to assist young people assume responsibility and become more active in their communities.
- Clare Youth Service will establish a research and development group, which will keep up-to-date with current youth work trends and ensure that creativity and imagination are maintained in programmes.
- Clare Youth Service will engage in raising awareness so that staff, volunteers and young people are able to recognise and work with diversity in all its forms.
- Clare Youth Service will expand its services in identified locations around the county.

Public Relations 2

Context:

Being aware of and creating awareness about issues facing young people, is an essential component of the work of Clare Youth Service. Public Relations is essential to keep the general public aware of the work of CYS, to highlight issues for our public representatives and keep funders up-dated on where resources are spent.

Goal:

To improve the public perception and understanding of the role and work of Clare Youth Service.

Objectives:

- Further develop the Clare Youth Service web page and our own publication CONNECT, to highlight youth work issues.
- Review and develop opportunities to network with local, regional and national statutory and voluntary bodies.
- Further develop our contacts with local print and broadcast media
- Be proactive in responding to issues (as they arise) that impact on the lives of young people.

Volunteers 3

Context:

Clare Youth Service recognises the value of volunteerism as being the foundation on which the organisation is built. They work in many capacities, as club leaders, board members, fundraisers, and all of this work needs to be encouraged and acknowledged.

Goal:

To promote and develop volunteerism as a way in which people can contribute to the well-being and development of young people.

Objectives:

- Clarify and strengthen the relationship between Clare Youth Service staff and volunteers
- Develop an agency policy on Volunteerism within Clare Youth Service.
- Develop a plan for the recruitment and on-going training of volunteers within Clare Youth Service.
- Acknowledge and record the contributions of existing volunteers and develop a plan for the on-going training and future recruitment of volunteers within Clare Youth Service.

Partnerships and Alliances 4

Context:

Clare Youth Service views youth work as a service integral to the development of young people. To this end we will engage with relevant bodies to promote this perspective.

Goal:

Maintain and build on existing external relationships, form new relationships, and work in partnerships in the delivery of services to young people.

Objectives:

- Develop an agency policy, which will govern our practice in forming links with external agencies.
- Regularly review existing partnerships and strategically target new alliances.
- Clare Youth Service, through the structures available to it will ensure that youth issues are considered in the development of public policy within Co. Clare.

Training and Development 5

Context:

A continuous programme of in-service training and development for volunteers and staff, will address the ever changing circumstances of young people and Clare Youth Service's commitment to quality.

Goal:

Ensure that the volunteers and staff of Clare Youth Service develop and maintain the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out their work to the highest standards.

Objectives:

- A new Induction Programme covering all aspects of the work of Clare Youth Service will be put in place for new staff and volunteers.
- Develop and implement a plan for the on-going training of staff and volunteers relevant to their areas of work and the changing nature of youth work.