



## newstart education centre

### Chairpersons Report

It is a great privilege and pleasure to present this year's Annual Report of Newstart Education Centre. Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to the achievements academic, social and developmental of all the participants who have attended Newstart Education Centre. Their success is an inspiration to their parents and carers, the staff at Newstart and the wider community. It is without hesitation that the board congratulate all the learners who have participated in the numerous programmes delivered by Newstart.

There have been significant changes to the Board of Management at Newstart since the last report. In this instance, I would like to thank our past Chairperson Koulla Yiasouma who stepped off the board due to her new post as the Commissioner for Children and young people. I would like to pay tribute to new members co-opted onto the board to help support the project. The calibre of these members is second to none and the qualities and skills they bring to the management team is welcomed in ensuring a successful provision, accommodating some of our most vulnerable young people and families. The work of Newstart is supported by the interest, dedication and hard work of the Board who despite heavy work schedules and family/caring commitments make the time to assist in providing a first class service to the young people of our city.

The success and desire to continue the delivery of good practice in alternative education can be demonstrated in an outstanding Education Training Inspectorate Report in 2015 for NEC. The report gave testimony to the dedication and unparalleled professionalism of the Director and brilliant staff team at Newstart Education Centre. The board and I would like to thank the director and staff team for their continued hard work in meeting the needs of young learner's every day. We continue to see the trend of exemplary delivery remain with a grass roots and person centred approach with more young people enjoying their learning journey and continuing to meet their potential in Newstart.

As a community organisation we would not enjoy our success without the support of a wide range of both statutory and voluntary organisations. Without this support, our holistic approach to the education and the progression of our young people, would be much more challenging and at times impossible.

Finally, I would like to thank the community that is Newstart for the privilege of being Chairperson and for allowing me to make a contribution to the education and well-being of young people and adult learners in an organisation that sets the standards for others to emulate.

Jim Donnelly

### Head of Centre Report

Newstart Education Centre has undergone some major changes throughout the organisation. Due to an extremely difficult and at times unfair application process, the organisation was unsuccessful in renewing monies under the European Social Fund. Whilst we campaigned and lobbied with local politicians, the loss of this money seen the organisation face a large number of redundancies including some of our longest serving members of staff, a huge loss to the organisation and the community in which we work. The delivery of vital services affected thus reducing some classes, courses and the number of hours that service delivery was available. We were and continue to be supported through this by not only our Board of Directors but also the local MP Paul Maskey and Junior Minister (MLA) Jennifer McCann.

This has not stopped NEC, we have dusted ourselves off and started to rebuild, we continue with our work funded by Belfast Regeneration Office we were also successful in a consortium bid with Include Youth to carry out some collaborative work within the STRIVE programme. This work was a follow up from Youth Works Initiative which was another very successful 16+ programme. We have now just been successful in a bid for a good relations grant awarded from OFMDFM for more collaborative work across Northern Ireland with more partnership work with Include Youth and Alternatives. Our day school continues to grow, with extra funding this year we will be able to introduce some of the GCSE classes we had to remove but not all of them. We eagerly await the tender bid from the Education Authority that was due this academic year so the organisation can compete for a level playing field for all its learners that they may enjoy the same afforded to their counterparts in the mainstream provision.

Newstart has a proven track record of excellent service delivery. The ETI has carried out a 4-day inspection and awarded Newstart Education Centre with Outstanding across all areas. While there is always room for improvement and learning we are thoroughly delighted with this outcome.

Newstart staff team is renowned for their levels of dedication, commitment and going beyond what is expected of them and this year has been no different, for that I want to take this opportunity to thank this wonderful team of professionals that includes the much valued time of our volunteers and placement students that enhances all of the work undertaken in our centre.

The young people who attend our centre are true characters, whilst they are referred to us via the EA Belfast Regional Options Panel for a variety of reasons that has made it impossible at times for them to be engaged in Mainstream School, at the heart of each of them is still the burning desire to be a young person and this is so evident on days out and weekends away. Our young people are smart, intelligent, funny, caring, admirable. They are an inspiration to me given the obstacles they face on a daily basis and in the face of this, they still attend, work hard and push themselves to their limits.

NEC Board of Directors are from a variety of disciplines, Youth Work, Business, Education, Human Rights, Equality, and Law. Each and every one of them both past and present are to be commended for their time and dedication to the project all of which is given in a voluntary nature.

Last but not least NEC could not function at such a high level without the help of all our funders. We are funded by a variety of funders for meeting specific need in the communities and families which need us the most. Let me take this opportunity to thank our funders who are acknowledged further in this report. I look forward to working with you all again.

Mary Nolan



## Overview of Newstart's Work

As an Alternative Education Centre, Newstart has developed a multi-disciplinary and innovative approach to the formal and informal education of young people who, for a wide variety of reasons found / find themselves outside the mainstream school system while providing access to support services for them and their families.

The team at Newstart promotes Young People's (Re)engagement in education and training to realize their potential and improve their life opportunities and choices. Many of our Young People face complex issues and find the safe, welcoming and professional environment where they are individually valued, respected and indeed challenged, one where they can achieve and turn their lives around. Similarly our Parents / Families and stakeholders engage much more effectively and find the team very inclusive, supportive and understanding. The multi-disciplinary team at Newstart works at enabling young people to re-engage with education, to become independent and to re-integrate into communities in which they live.

Newstart provides a range of courses, support and opportunities for adult learners, lone parents economically inactive and unemployed people. As part of the Alternative Education Providers Forum, Newstart is also involved in facilitating seminars, research, lobbying and campaigning.

## Achievement Night

This year the achievement night took place in April in Belfast City Hall. This even was hosted by the Lord Mayor Arder Carson. The evening was compered by our own Chloe Lennon and was a tremendous success. This year we had many special guests including Jennifer McCann MLA, Paul Maskey MP and Mariead McCafferty Chief Executive of NICCY.

We celebrated the adult, community and day school learners, many young people were awarded special awards for their commitment to learning and personal and social development. This year's awards went to:

**Positive Steps:** Dean Prenter and Aimee Ryan

**Endeavour:** Fionnbarr McMahon and Nikita Connors

**Vocational:** Leah Hyndman

**Resilience:** Chloe Lennon

**Mariead McCafferty Award for Academic Achievement:** Chloe Lennon



## Jumpstart @ Newstart

JumpStart uses a cutting edge combination of adventure learning, resilience building, emotional intelligence, one to one support and peer supported projects. JumpStart enables marginalised and at risk young people to better reach their learning potential, develop better transition skills, move away from negative coping mechanisms, enhance their mental and physical health and well-being and thus become better prepared for educative ventures. The staff work intensively with small groups of young people over the course of the year identifying young people led issues and supporting the development and support needed to overcome these. The staff develop strong and genuine relationships with the young people in an informal setting outside of the classroom allowing these exchanges to take place.

The Jumpstart programme has continued its work across the AEP Forum and we have now strengthened our relationship with Corpus Christi College. We work with 3 groups within the school, 1 group per term ranging from years 10 – 12. This has developed from our first year within mainstream schools where we trialled one group in the final term of last year.

The Jumpstart programme changed their approach in relation to the pathways project due to last year's evaluation and feedback in relation to how we work with the 3 sites. We now work with each group in a 12 week block instead of the original 1 group every 3 weeks as we have found that this consistency has allowed stronger relationships to be formed and better suited the needs of the groups.

Jumpstart has continued to work with young people from Conway Mill across the year building on the work from last year. Due to the closures of the day schools within Open Doors and Tollymore we no longer have young people from these centres and as such we have developed the programme to better suit the needs of Conway Mill with smaller groups and more intense one to one work.

We are finding that the issues which young people are facing have been similar to previous years in relation to mental health, suicide, anxiety and depression, anger management, substance misuse and poverty however we are now seeing an increase in issues with young people and technology such as mobiles, social networks and gaming which are becoming serious issues within their daily routines and leading to issues with sleeping.





**Family, Health and Support Work at Newstart:** This has been another busy year for Newstart with many positive outcomes and further funding for another year. We have great relationships with our parents and guardians and we continue to work together in getting our young people to realise their true potential both within the centre and with our community outreach groups.

Newstart students have worked on Level 1 in Healthy Living and a range of health related AQA's. This practical experience will help to enhance their life skills and academic achievement.

The community outreach groups worked with this year are Frank Gillen Centre, St Agnes's Youth Club, Holy Trinity, Corpus Christie Youth Club, Matt Talbot, Roden Street and St James Youth group. We continue to work with West Belfast Area Project in delivering a range of health related programmes to these groups such as bullying, alcohol awareness and are needs led.

We have delivered six transitions programmes to P7 children preparing them for the next stage in their post primary education. Feedback suggests that this programme is necessary and a positive experience to all those who have completed it.

A big highlight for us was our presentation evening in the City Hall in April. A first time experience for some parents and young people alike. This was supported by the Lord Mayor Arder Carson and a number of our MLA's. A great evening was had by all.

A big part of our work is providing Suicide and Self Harm awareness programmes for young people and unfortunately the need for this type of information hasn't diminished. Even though this is an emotive subject the general thread of our programme is confidence and communication building.

The summer months are a time to regroup refresh and plan for the new school year.

**English, Religion and Maths:** As an Alternative Education Centre, Newstart has developed a multi-disciplinary and innovative approach to the formal and informal education of young people who, for a wide variety of reasons found / find themselves outside the mainstream school system while providing access to support services for them and their families.

This year Newstart focused on Essential Skills Literacy and focused our Action Based Activities on issues that impact on the lives of Young People. The young people enjoyed researching the different areas from substance misuse to anti-social behaviour and mental health issues. The young people produced excellent pieces of work and enjoyed researching their chosen area. In Maths the focus was also in Essential Skills focusing on tasks to build their portfolios. The Young People have worked hard in all classes and reached their potential in the area of Literacy and Numeracy. Some Young People completed GCSE's in English, Maths, ICT and Religion, this was a massive achievement for the young people who focused their attention to meet their goals.

**Edexcel BTEC Level 2 Certificate for IT Users :** As part of our continued curriculum development we are piloting the BTEC Level 2 Certificate for IT Users. The course requires our users to complete 4 units which enables them to demonstrate word processing skills, using presentation software, setting up a computer and how to improve productivity using IT.

**Youth Development Programme:** This past year has been an eventful one for the youth programme in Newstart, whilst continuing to support the young people of the Day School and assist them in successfully gaining further qualifications and transitions into further education and employment, the programme has expanded into differing areas of work that has sought to further enhance the capacity of our learners and also the profile of Newstart as a Centre of Excellence.

In partnership with the Youth Council for Northern Ireland Newstart was part of the pilot delivery for the revised Certificate in Youth Work Practice at Level 2. This meant that local youth groups were able to access this training for their staff to enhance the skills and services that they delivered. Organisations who accessed this training were; Matt Talbot Youth Club, Holy Trinity Youth Club, the Upper Springfield Youth Team, Clonard Youth Club.

The youth programme also successfully delivered Level One in Youth Work Skills to 21 young volunteers with the Upper Springfield Youth Team as part of their volunteer development programme.

This year Newstart was part of successful collaboration in the delivery of the Strive Pilot for United Youth. Working alongside our long-standing partners in Include Youth. The programme was delivered in conjunction with Alternatives NI, YMCA Lisburn and Youth Initiatives. Strive aimed to work and develop the programme under guidance from the young people on the following themes:

- **Good Relations:** Develop new approaches that make sense in the young people's current context
- **Citizenship:** Increased sense of belonging and connection to local community
- **Social & emotional capabilities:** Based on the needs of each group and individual
- **Employability:** Practical needs led activities and exploration of progression after the programme

The programme worked with 50+ young people working to their needs, delivering qualifications and personal development which culminated in a

## Staff Training

Newstart continues to recognise the importance of continual professional development for its staff and this year the staff have been supported in successfully training in the following areas.

- Boxall Training (Alice and Sharon)
- Level 4 — Assessor Qualifications (Mary and John)
- M.Ed Pastoral Care for Teachers and Young people (Alice)
- Level 5 — Management (Mary)
- B.Sc (Hons) - Youth and Community Work (John)
- First Aid (Joe and Stu)
- Archery (Joe and Stu)
- Duke of Edinburgh (Joe and Stu)
- Bounce — Resilience Enhancing Training
- Level 2 Certificate — Youth Work Practice (Gary)
- DipHE— Computing and IT (Gary)
- Level 5 — Supervision and Management (Joe)



## Staff & Board Members 2015-16

Mary Nolan (Head of Centre)

John McComb (Youth Development Officer)

Sharon Lindsay (Health / Family Worker / Outreach)

Alice Quinn (Teacher: English & Religion)

Joanne Jardine (Teacher: Mathematics)

Joe Dickey (Resilience Coach)

Stuart O'Neill (Resilience Support Coach)

Gary McAreavey (Learning Support & ICT Administrator)

Claire Crozier (Volunteer)

Kelly Hughes (Volunteer)

Deborah Lowry (Volunteer)

Jim Donnelly (Chair Person)

Marie McIlwee (Treasurer)

Fred Brown (Board Member)

John Barry (Board Member)

Louise Brennan (Board Member)

Padraig O'Muirigh (Board Member)

Mary Lavery (Board Member)

Frank Maskey (Board Member)

Mark Copeland (Board Member)

### To Our Funders....

Newstart has been very fortunate to be supported by a number of very generous funders and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them. Firstly we must acknowledge the Education Authority Belfast Region and the local schools who have been our referral partners and worked in partnership with us to provide off-site education to the young people at Newstart.

DSD and BRO have been consistent in their assistance with funding for our Health and Wellbeing programmes and family support. These programmes are vital to our service users and we are grateful for the continued support in these areas of work. BRO have also recently provided us with a grant to update our computer suite this will allow us to assist all our users in moving forward in the digital age of information technologies.

United Youth - Newstart was part of a collaborative bid that allowed us to continue partnerships with other agencies doing like minded work. This work has been the building blocks for new funding from OFMDFM Good relations that has also been successful to continue more partner working across different sites with Include Youth and Alternatives.

BBC Children in Need Northern Ireland has funded our innovative resilience-building Jumpstart@Newstart programme since 2010 and we are currently in the middle of our 3 year funding package. This programme started as a pilot led scheme and has over the years moved across all the AEP sites and this year into the Mainstream working on retaining young people in school places. We have also received small grants from other funders, CFNI, West Belfast Partnership Board, Belfast City Council.



\* Accounts are ready for collection on request \*



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