



newstart education centre

Chairpersons Report

This is my first year as Chair of Newstart and it has been an honour to witness Mary and her team working with young people to both realise and release their enormous potential. The organisation continues to develop its services and supporting systems to ensure that it remains robust in uncertain times. We await guidance from the Department of Education with regards to the future direction of alternative education across the North. By working in partnership with other providers through the AEP, the Department and Belfast Education and Library Board I am confident that Newstart is well placed to continue to provide education to some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in our communities.

It is fair to say that Newstart has been on quite a rollercoaster ride in the last 25 years but always at the centre has been the needs and rights of the young people and their families. This report outlines the young people's magnificent achievements over the year and is a testament to the effectiveness of the holistic approach that Newstart has. The child and family centred approach which supports young people to develop their personal and social skills has resulted in continued improved educational attainment and with the young people more confident as they enter adulthood.

Additionally Newstart continues to develop work with young people and adults who are over 16 years providing education, training and employability services for the whole community.

The success of Newstart is due to the partnership between the committed, passionate and excellent staff and volunteer team who regularly go that extra 10 miles and the young people who daily demonstrate an eagerness and commitment to learn and achieve.

I would like to thank my colleague Board members for their commitment and diligence – we may be small in number but we are big on dedication to Newstart. My final thanks goes to Mary, our Director who with her team lives and breathes Newstart. It is a real privilege to be involved with such a wonderful organisation.

Koulla Yiasouma

Head of Centre Report

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of Newstart Education Centre. I would like to share with you the work undertaken by the Board, the Staff Team, the young people and their families and our adult learners during the past year highlighting our achievements and signalling our future plans. This coming year we are celebrating 25 years of a very successful and unique organisation.

Newstart Education Centre evolved out of 'Lower Falls Newstart Project' set up in 1989 – one of four Belfast wide 'Auto Projects' – to provide diversionary activities for Young People in the city. The Education Centre was established in January 1996 to address the educational / social and life skills of Young People, aged 14 – 17. As an Alternative Education Centre it 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. Newstart also works with the local community networking with other providers to engage adult learners over the age of 17.

The team at Newstart promotes Young People's (re)engagement in education and training to realise their potential and improve their life opportunities and choices. We not only work to improve the lives of our users through academia but also through personal and social development allowing space for many of them to be heard and make appropriate change in their lives when they feel ready with our support. Many of our beneficiaries face complex issues and find the safe, welcoming and professional environment where they are individually valued, respected and indeed challenged, is 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.

Newstart has developed an innovative approach to the education of young people and a holistic, wraparound support service for them and their families. We deal, sometimes on a daily basis with issues such as drug and alcohol misuse, mental health difficulties, behavioural challenges, violence in the home, the effects of generational unemployment and the multiple effects of poverty.

We take referrals from all the statutory organisations, and network closely with them to provide the most effective service delivery to ensure best practice, including Education & Library Board, Local Schools, Education Welfare Service, Social Services and the Youth Justice Agency, and we operate five days a week including 3 evenings and occasional weekend work. Sessions are provided to cater for different aptitudes, abilities, one-to-one and education packages tailored to meet the needs of the individual. We also provide a range of courses, support and opportunities for adult learners, lone parents, economically inactive and unemployed people. Newstart is also involved in facilitating seminars, research, lobbying and campaigning.

We view learning as life long and mentor the young people and adult learners to reassess their position within their community and wider society. Our Mission statement is "Realising Potential" and our primary aim is to address the needs of our service users by adopting a holistic approach. Newstart believes in acknowledging the different ways in which our user groups have applied themselves and put in the effort towards achieving their potential, often in the face of adversity and/or previous negative experiences. We acknowledge their perseverance and determination to achieve and the tireless efforts and support provided to them by the Staff in the organisation to help them achieve their goals.

I would like to thank the Board for their continued voluntary support and dedication to this project, their sharing of knowledge and professionalism that helps to guide us, especially to our Chair Person Koulla Yiasouma who is forever making herself available especially in crucial times giving her time and support.

I would like to thank the Young People for their commitment to their education and the parents for their continued support and all of the community, voluntary and statutory agencies that support our project. Our much needed and valuable work would not happen if it were not for the support of our funders so I take this opportunity to thank, Belfast Education and Library Board, European Social Fund, Belfast Regeneration Office, Children in Need, Youth Council Northern Ireland and Department of Education.

Last but by no means least may I say a huge thank you to a staff team who is dedicated, committed and enthusiastic about the work we undertake. They go above and beyond to provide a full and varied programme of learning to best suit the needs of all our groups and have stamped the Newstart name and image to all our users and the local community.

I look forward to working both with and for you over this next year.

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.



Residential at White Park Bay, March 2013

As you may know Newstart's approach to learning is a holistic approach and a lot of work is achieved through the positive relationships staff build with young people. One of the ways we did this last year was through residential. This builds positive relationships and allows for these to grow in an unstructured fun atmosphere. This year we had a great residential in the North Coast in White Park Bay thanks to Dermot O'Lynn and the staff of Hosteling International Northern Ireland. The Young people participated in activities including bowling, kite building (Moirs Cheated) and late night karaoke sessions as well as some hot seat interrogations. This was a great break away and recharged staff and young people to tackle the huge mountain of examination season. We are looking forward to doing this all again this year.

Exam Results

Newstart believes in supporting young people through supporting families. Within our family support mechanism we encourage all our parents/guardians to participate in relevant courses and information services.

We support family members to help, guide and address issues with their young people, facilitate parent/guardian groups and meetings and also offer a wide range of specifically designed courses to both parents and other groups within the community. These include Self Awareness, Personal Development, Emotional Health & Well being, Talking about Tough Issues, Domestic Violence, Self Harm & Suicide Awareness. Each course or information session is tailored to suit the needs of the group.

The community groups worked with this year are St Michael's Youth Club, Roden Street Youth Group, Frank Gillen Centre, St Agnes Youth Club and Women's Common Path Network. We have also co worked along side Women's Aid, LAMP, FASA, Community Development Health Network, Falls Community Council, Divis Community Centre and West Belfast Area Project.

Our Occupational studies cookery programme has been really successful with many wonderful meals being prepared and served for all the staff and young people. We were also given the opportunity to visit St Louise's kitchen and were provided with a lovely lunch. So a big thank you to Rosemary and well done to our budding chefs.

JumpStart @ Newstart

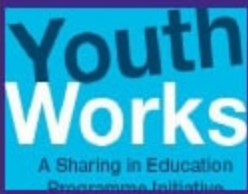
This year has seen the development of a JumpStart resilience programme network. As of April last year we have put in place a full time Resilience coach with the creation of a new team in Newstart delivering this innovative programme to all AEPs in the Belfast area. We have proven the value of this Newstart designed programme over the previous three years and now all AEPs are availing of this free complimentary service as part of their own weekly programmes.

Exam Results

Last year was an outstanding year for Newstart with exam results. We topped our previous results with young people getting qualifications in Essential Skills ranging from entry level one right through to level 2. This prepared our GCSE pupils for GCSE exams and gave all pupils a real sense of achievement and motivation to progress into different forms of education. We are delighted with this year's results which included A* and have allowed those young people involved to go onto BMC to do A* levels and vocational courses like engineering. Others went to training centres studying business and warehousing. Last year Newstart awarded almost 300 qualifications including Essential Skills, GCV's, AQA's GCSE's and A-levels. All our learners should be very proud of the effort that they put into their studies.

New Course Offered

Newstart is very proud to be offering the Classroom Assistants qualification. This is a level three course and all staff have embraced the opportunity to design and deliver this course. It is being steered by John McComb and ten learners are participating in the evening classes. This has been a real boost to Newstart with this term seeing all the learners take up placement and supporting the learning in the centre. We hope that this course will be the extremely successful and we can run it again next year enabling learning and employment opportunities to participants in the local community. This qualification is a big step towards employment and we wish this year's participants the very best.



Youth Works @ Newstart

The Youth works programme also excelled in gaining qualifications for the young people who attended the two wonderful programmes. The young people within these two groups managed to achieve 129 qualifications. These young people who had been out of education and left school with little or no qualifications gained confidence in their ability, and self belief and progressed into further training in education taking on courses in beauty and animal care. Well done to the Youth works Team and participants for two very successful programmes and a huge thank you to Youth Council for Northern Ireland and Include Youth for the tie assistance in administering the Youth Works programme at Newstart.



Staff & Board Members 2013

Mary Nolan (Head of Centre)

Betty Murray (Finance / Administration Officer)

Geraldine Telford (Policy Officer)

Maeve O'Lynn (Development Coordinator)

John McComb (Youth Development Officer)

Sharon Lindsay (Health / Family Worker / Outreach)

Alice Quinn (Teacher: English & RE)

Moira Cullen (Teacher: Maths & ICT)

Marty Pelan (Resilience Coach)

Gary McAreavey (Learning Support & ICT Administrator)

Billy Kane (Learning Support)

Lauren Elliott (Placement Student)

Joe Dickey (Youth Mentor - YouthWorks)

Arelene Blaney (Youth Worker - YouthWorks)

Koulla Yaisouma (Chair Person)

Marie McIlwee (Treasurer)

Fred Brown (Board Member)

John Barry (Board Member)

Louise Brennan (Board Member)

Siobhan Duffin (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 Department of Employment and Learning who administer the European Social Fund, which has been funding programmes at Newstart and staff salaries for a number of years now. Newstart is also supported by Belfast Education and Library Board 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.

BBC Children in Need Northern Ireland has funded our innovative resilience-building Jumpstart@Newstart programme since 2010 and have recently agreed to fund a full-time salary post for a Resilience Coach for a further year in 2013/14. We have recently applied to CIN once again to continue the excellent resilience service provided by Newstart and delivered to all 5 AEP's and the local community.

We have also just received small grants from Belfast City Council, Lloyds TSB Community Foundation Northern Ireland, Youth Justice and Belfast Taxi Association made us their charity of the month in December 2013.

We also have to thank the organisers of the Community Pharmacy programme for involving outreach and in-house groups at Newstart in 2012-2013.



♦ *Accounts are ready for collection on request* ♦



newstart
education centre

<http://www.newstartedu.org.uk>