



newstart  
education centre

## Chairpersons Report

It is a great source of pride and pleasure to present this year's Annual Report of Newstart Education Centre. Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to the achievements of all the learners across Newstart Education Centre. Their successes are not easily achieved and every step forward is an inspiration to their, families, 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.

This was my second year as chair of Newstart Education Centre and in that time I have been delighted to watch the centre go from strength to strength. The staff and management team continue to strive for excellence in all the respective fields and promote the centres ethos and values with a keen vigour and passion sometimes in the face of great adversity. I would like to pay tribute to my colleagues on the board of directors who provide their time voluntarily to help support the project. The calibre of these members are insurmountable 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.

At this point, I wish to acknowledge the dedication and unparalleled professionalism of the Director Mary Nolan, who drives the work of Newstart with an unerving passion and unbridled commitment. This is evident in the highly motivated and loyal 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 learners' every day. Newstart continues to set the trend in exemplary practice and remain rooted in a grass roots and person centred approach with more young people enjoying their learning journey and continuing to meet their potential in Newstart and beyond.

The board would like to take this time to acknowledge the wide range of partners, funders and support services from across the statutory and voluntary sectors whose continued supports enables the organisation to continue to provide a holistic approach to the education and the progression of our young people.

Finally, I would like to thank the wider Newstart family for the privilege of being Chairperson and for allowing me to contribute 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

Welcome to our Annual Report 2017. Since last reporting—and in line with our Strategic Plan NEC has continued to expand and enhance its services, curriculum and accreditation available across all its programme areas.

The achievements of our participants are many not just in terms of their academic and vocational qualifications but also through their personal development, confidence gained and lives changed.

This is due to the Organisation's committed and professional Staff Team who have the full support and encouragement of NEC Board Of Directors. We continue to build upon our 'In-house' and 'Outreach' provision for a greater number of beneficiaries across Northern Ireland and also for a range of Community and Statutory Agencies, delivering education and training courses and programmes of relevance and based on identified need.

Our advocacy and lobbying roles extend from acting on behalf of our Young People and Families 'on the ground' but also in the political and government arenas. Our role has been vital in highlighting and progressing the issues facing us in this Education Sector.

As Education evolves in this new phase in N. I. we will continue to realise our vision as a Centre of Excellence, promote equality in / through education and ensure effective and appropriate educational and life opportunities in environments which facilitate the valuing and inclusion of ALL our participants through integrated working in collaboration and partnerships with all stakeholders.

As ever, all our committed staff team deserve the greatest of thanks for the work they do with the young people, their parents/guardians and families and in all the outreach programmes delivered across the community and statutory sectors.

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.

I would like to thank all of our participants for their commitment to their education and the parents/families 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, The Education Authority, Belfast Regeneration Office, The Executive Office, Children in Need, Victoria Holmes and West Belfast Partnership Board.

I, like all of you, look forward to our future.

**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 and Success

Newstart Education Centre as always is very proud of the young people and learners, and this year is no different. We are very proud of the host of qualifications that our young people achieved. Some of our young people achieved some of the highest GCSE grades that the centre has had. All our young people left with qualifications in Literacy and Numeracy as well as qualifications in sports leadership, healthy living, PSHE, and life skills. We also had adult learners who achieved their level three Classroom Assistants course.

This is a big achievement and will allow these learners to move forward into the world of work in this field 50% so far have obtained employment.



## Jumpstart @ Newstart

The Jumpstart programme this year has continued to work with groups from the AEP Forum and mainstream education providers including Newstart Education Centre, Conway Mill, Pathways and Corpus Christi College. This work consists of a holistic approach from staff, using outdoor settings as a means to best support overall learning and development. Particular focus and value is placed on adventure learning, one to one support and peer supported learning in order to explore resilience, reflection and positive coping strategies.

Jumpstart enjoyed a great year working with various centres and young people from all over Belfast. The Programme allowed young people the opportunity to gain support while exploring some of the most scenic and beautiful areas our country has to offer. Feedback from many of the young people stated that without the programmes activities and sessions, they wouldn't have visited or experienced these outstanding locations.

We have continued to work with and address issues such as mental health, suicide, anxiety, depression, anger management, substance misuse and poverty. However this year we seen an increase in issues around technology such as mobiles, social networks and gaming, which appeared to disrupt young people's daily routines in a negative way.

Previous amendments to the way in which we worked with Pathways groups have proved efficient and is now the way in which we will be operating. This arrangement involves working with each site separately on a twelve weekly basis.

The Jumpstart team this year said farewell to Resilience coach Joseph Dickey and welcomed in our new member of staff David Gibney to the post.

**Family, Health and Support Work at Newstart:** This has been another good and particularly busy year for the Family Health Support project. There have been many positive outcomes for our students, their families and community outreach groups. Alongside this we have been able to at times of crisis to support, advocate on behalf of and sign post on for our parents who do a great job at often very stressful times. Give yourselves a pat on the back.

During the year we identified and delivered a range of health programmes to a number of community youth groups. Topics included Self Awareness, Suicide Awareness, Emotional Well being and Positive Mental Health.

We had a great number participating in our transition programmes. We strive to make the changeover as easy as possible for all those involved. Responses and feedback from these and our transition sessions has been amazing, attendance was a great indicator of the success of all the programmes.

During this period we were fortunate enough to be able to invite a number of organisations in to enhance our teaching. Thank you to Lighthouse, Brooke NI, Eating Disorders, Belfast City Council and West Belfast Area Project.

Well done to all our students for all your hard work both in and out of the classroom. This has also been an exciting but emotional time as we have seen our leavers develop, mature and grow in confidence enabling them to continue with their education and employability projects.

Congratulations all out leavers and participants on your achievements. Thank you to our funders and heres to another successful year ahead and to the future.

**GRIP 2016/17:** The GRIP (Good Relation and Innovative Practice) programme 2016/ 2017, worked with young people to develop a greater awareness, knowledge and acceptance of all who live in our communities in Northern Ireland. This programme aimed to move away from the traditional notion of community relations and include those considered most vulnerable in our society.

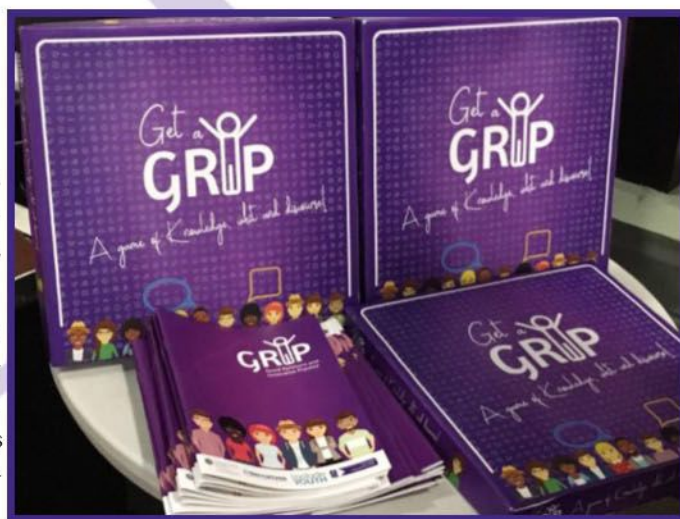
It was delivered to the needs wants and desires of the young people who we identified as participants, all of whom were deemed “stretch to reach young people.”

We believe that in order to help “build a united community”, all aspects and individuals in the community should be included as part of awareness raising to promote acceptance and tolerance. This vital work includes:

- The PUL and CRN communities
- BME community
- Traveller community
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Alongside this work the programmes examines minorities as priorities this includes, Gender Awareness, LGBT&T Awareness, Ageism, Disabilities and cultural differences between urban and rural communities, and challenging perpetuating myths and stereotypes.

The young people involved in GRIP developed a resource in the form of a board game which they called “Get a GRIP!” This is a resource for professionals to use to generate discussion on all aspects of Good Relations which was launched in the 147 Trust in March and was hosted by Barra Best. We hope to roll this resource out to other organisations across Northern Ireland in the coming year.



The programme was delivered with the support of the NI Executive Office, Together: Building United Communities.

## 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 (Alice and Sharon)
- School Based Anxiety (Alice and Sharon)
- Steps to Leadership Qualification (Alice)
- Child Protection Refresher Training (All Staff)
- AQA—Webinar Training (Sharon)
- White Water Safety And Rescue Training (Dee)
- Canoe leadership training (Dee)
- Level 2—Rec Training (Dee)
- BSc—Computing and IT Practice (Gary)
- Level 5—Leadership and management (Mary)

## Staff & Board Members 2016-17

**Mary Nolan** (Head of Centre)

**John McComb** (Youth Development Officer)

**Sharon Lindsay** (Health / Family Worker / Outreach)

**Alice Quinn** (Teacher: English & Religion)

**Tracy Galvin** (Teacher: ICT)

**Joanne Jardine** (Teacher: Mathematics)

**David Gibney** (Resilience Coach)

**Mark O'Neill** (Resilience Support Coach)

**Gary McAreavey** (Learning Support & ICT Administrator)

**Claire Crozier** (Volunteer)

**Danielle Mulvena** (Volunteer)

**Jenny Green** (Volunteer)

**Kelly Hughes** (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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