
Ardoyne Youth Enterprise

Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026



Linking YOUTH with
opportunities to build
stronger communities





Kaila Patterson, joint winner of our Children of Lockdown writing completion, interviews author Paul McVeigh for NVTV.
Cover photo: volunteer Jenny and youth workers Natalie and Donovan on outreach detached walk around Ardoyne.

With thanks to

The Community Academy, who played a major role in helping us shape this strategic plan

The Urban Villages Initiative

Department for Communities

Our members and partners across North Belfast and beyond

Our board, staff and young volunteers

Ardoyne Youth Enterprise

Our 2023-2026 Strategy on a page

Mission

To maximise the opportunities and resources available to children and young people through an inclusive and strategic approach to the development and delivery of youth participation and youth services.

Vision

'Linking **youth** with opportunities to build stronger communities.'

Values

- Providing **Opportunities**
- Being **Inclusive**
- Working in **Partnership**
- Empowering **Participation**

Strategic themes and aims

1. **A thriving Youth & Community Hub and sustainable AYE** – we will build a strong and sustainable infrastructure capable of supporting dynamic services, connecting, and engaging members, championing good relations and developing partnerships through a thriving Youth & Community Hub.
2. **A supported and connected membership, driving service innovation for young people** – working in partnership with members and young people, we will create innovative, inclusive, and strategic approaches to youth participation and service delivery.
3. **Engaged and empowered children and young people equipped to reach their full potential and to contribute to positive community leadership** – working alongside young people, identify individual and collective needs and help support all young people to reach their full potential.
4. **A thriving AYE delivering change through strong strategic partnerships** – through a stronger and engaged network we will build key partnerships to develop and deliver a needs based and strategic approach to youth services and community development.

Chairperson's foreword



AYE has grown from strength to strength since it started in 1996 as Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum, a network of youth and community groups founded by local community activists to increase communication between local and statutory youth providers, develop youth resources and ensure that our young people were getting the best and most effective service possible.

As AYPF and later AYE, we grew and evolved in response to the needs and requests of members, young people, and the community, piloting initiatives and developing structures and services to support and complement the work of our members.

Over time, we successfully managed the transition from a voluntary network to a thriving youth support and community development service that employs seven staff, and runs accredited training, personal development and outreach detached youth work, as well as community regeneration, good relations, and diversity programmes. AYE is now widely recognised as a provider of youth and community support and a dependable organisation that fosters partnerships to enhance services for everyone in Ardoyne and its neighbouring areas.

In the process, we moved from a small office in a youth club to our own rented premises on Flax Street, with offices, private space for mentoring sessions, a meeting room, youth drop-in and community garden. We have now outgrown that space and are developing a Youth and Community Hub that will accommodate our need for state-of-the-art training and meeting facilities, digital hub, and neutral meeting space for young people.

This is an achievement we are proud of as it is driving a community partnership process which, among other successes, has brought a 3G football pitch to Marrowbone Millennium Park which is extensively used by local sports clubs and youth organisations and now about to be expanded on by Belfast City Council and Urban Villages.

We are also extremely proud of our commitment to building good relations and have championed this through initiatives such as active participation in North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme, where we have enhanced good relations through wider North Belfast, built strong links with partners in neighbouring areas and developed important capacity building programmes in the process.

In recent years, we managed pilot outreach detached partnerships with youth centres in Woodvale, Ballysillan and New Lodge, and helped create a one-year partnership outreach programme for youth clubs in Ardoyne and Marrowbone. We have not doubt that further projects will build on the proven success of these pilots to develop

new outreach initiatives in North Belfast. Meanwhile, our team ensures continuity of youth outreach on the streets of Ardoyne and Oldpark.

We work hard to develop services, opportunities and strategic gains to youth organisations and young people, and to play a pivotal role in community development and service delivery in Ardoyne, Marrowbone and across North Belfast.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognise the hard work and commitment of AYE's staff, who live and champion our values through all activities and programmes of work. We would also like to thank our funders for their support, trust and investment through the years: Belfast City Council; Cooperation Ireland; Department for Communities; Education Authority; Halifax Foundation NI; National Lottery Community Fund; Northern Ireland Community Relations Council; The Executive Office; The Urban Villages Initiative.

Thank you.

Sally Smyth

Chairperson, Ardoyne Youth Enterprise



Introduction

About Ardoyne Youth Enterprise

Founded in November 1996 by a network of youth and community groups, Ardoyne Youth Enterprise (AYE) is a youth and community development organisation operating in the Ardoyne, Oldpark and Marrowbone areas of North Belfast.

As a network of over 25 registered youth and community groups, we work closely with over 40 youth local provider groups, including youth clubs, community organisations, schools, and residents' groups. Through this strategic partnership approach, we strive to deliver our overall purpose of ***developing youth resources locally and ensuring that local young people receive the most effective services possible.***

Our leadership consists of a Management Board of nine Directors and AYE's work programmes and services are delivered by a committed and passionate team of one full time staff, three part time youth workers and one part-time administrator.

Using a youth centred approach to community development, we are committed to:

- Engaging and listening to the views of young people to ensure their views are the driving force behind all our work
- Outreach and detached youth work that targets at risk and marginalised young people through inclusive bespoke interventions and personal development programmes. This includes developing training and mentoring opportunities and signposting to existing services.
- Designing and delivering strategic youth development plans.
- Diversity and good relations initiatives and youth governance programmes across the area.
- Running vital community transport services to help ensure young people are connected
- Ongoing facilitation and development of strategic collaborations and communication between local providers to create and secure youth service resources and opportunities for local young people.

A strategic approach to supporting YOUTH needs today and tomorrow

This strategy has been developed in line with the needs and voices of young people at one of the most significant periods in recent history as we witness the huge impact the pandemic has had and continues to have on our children, young people, and wider communities.

As the country begins to emerge from the pandemic there are several existing as well as new challenges facing young people and we are dedicated to working in partnership to meet and beat these challenges.

Fuelled by the needs of young people today and tomorrow, this strategy has been developed to both respond to known need and remain flexible to change as and when required over the next three years. Furthermore, the decision to develop a three-year strategic plan was taken by the organisation's leadership in 2021 to ensure our ambitions and plans were aligned to developing a new Youth and Community Hub. This 'roadmap' aims to successfully deliver our vision and mission, whilst holding true to our values of providing opportunities, being inclusive, working in partnership and empowering participation.

Over several months, we engaged with key internal and external stakeholders and performed a strategic review and environmental analysis. The findings have played a pivotal role in identifying key priorities and actions for inclusion within the strategy as we strive to deliver our vision of **linking youth with opportunities to build stronger communities.**



MADE 2021 squad (Monkstown Ardoyne Diversity and Empowerment Programme) on their Xmas night out.

Our vision

'Linking **youth** with opportunities to build stronger communities.'

Our mission statement

To maximise the opportunities and resources available to children and young people through an inclusive and strategic approach to the development and delivery of youth participation and youth services.

Our values

Our work will be guided by our commitment to the following principles:

- **Providing Opportunities** – we are committed to ensuring every child and young person in the community reaches their full potential and we will champion a person-centred approach, design, and deliver high quality personal development and training opportunities and provide a strategic platform for our members to help increase accessibility to the best opportunities and resources available.
- **Being Inclusive** – placing equality, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of all our work, we will continue to build trust, confidence, and good relations to ensure everyone feels accepted, included and safe as they strive to reach their full potential.
- **Working in Partnership** – we are stronger together and through our young people and membership we will champion the creation of strategic partnerships that better harness community resources to ensure that every young person has access to the best support and services possible.
- **Empowering Participation** – standing alongside young people, we will ensure their voices are central to all our work as we plan, deliver, evaluate, and articulate support and services that empower them to grow and thrive.



HerVoice personal development and youth leadership programme for young women.

Our key challenges

The development of this strategy has given us with a better understanding of our organisation, our beneficiaries, and the wider environment. As a result, the organisation has been able to prioritise several key challenges which the strategy aims to address over the three or more years.

Our key challenges include:

- **Getting our governance and operating model right** - The operating model is the bridge between the strategy and implementation, so it is important that we focus on strengthening the governance arrangements (including composition, structures, and capacity building) as we prepare and transition into a new Centre.
- **Redefining and reconfirming our main purpose** - the new building offers a lot of opportunities for AYE to specialise services within training, youth development and youth advocacy. As such, there is a need for the organisation to consider redefining or reconfirming its role especially regarding youth outreach and supporting local youth organisations. Important questions such as what is AYE's unique selling point (USP)? What does AYE do? What does it mean to be a member of AYE?
- **A pathway to outcomes – synergetic services** – redefining and reconfirming AYE's role and relationship with members will help the organisation to develop better integration of its services and clearer pathways to better outcomes.
- **Managing any change - a cultural shift in thinking and approach** – in recognition of the changes required over the next few years, AYE must consider and carefully manage the impact of any changes to its purpose and services within the current organisation and across the external environment.
- **The need to prioritise and pivot in challenging times** – like so many organisations, the huge uncertainty coming from factors such as BREXIT, the pandemic and the implications of conflicts and wars makes it extremely challenging for strategic delivery and many organisations may need to quickly re-prioritise objectives and budgets as well as ensure there is enough agility within operations to pivot services to meet community needs.

This means we will have to prioritise what is important and not over-stretch resources as well as ensuring the strategy, operational plans and services are flexible to meet new challenges and take advantage of potential opportunities as quickly as possible. Equally, AYE will need to regularly monitor and evaluate activity across the year to support this approach.

- **Securing strategic partnerships:** Rarely can any organisation deliver on its own and we believe we are stronger together. By forming strategic alliances, we can maximise our individual and collective power to provide the best opportunities

for children, young people, and our members. Stronger partnerships will allow us to build stronger evidence and deliver bigger impact.

- **Limited resources and the need to build a more sustainable organisation:** like many organisations, the current economic environment ensures there is limitless need and demand on our services but limited funding and capacity to do everything we need to do. Financial sustainability is imperative for AYE as it strives to scale up operations to effectively support a fully functioning Youth and Community Hub.
- **Investing in telling the story and demonstrating impact:** Engaging with key stakeholders in the community highlighted the need to tell our story better as well as measuring and demonstrating our impact going forward. At the heart of this work is the need to further develop youth advocacy so we can support and strengthen the voices of young people in our communities – placing their voice at the heart of our service development and delivery as well as creating a youth centred community.



AYE networking meeting at NBWISP (North Belfast Women's Initiative and Support Project) in Ballysillan, with representatives from North Belfast youth and community groups.

Our key achievements

For 25 years we have been working to maximize the opportunities and resources available to young people through an inclusive approach to youth services where best practice and youth participation are crucial to delivery.

Our organisation has played a significant role in helping to empower young people and create youth centered communities and we are proud of the many achievements and successes.

There have been so many successes over the past five years, with a dedicated membership and small staff team. We are extremely proud of this wide range of achievements.



Certificates presentation at QUB Graduate School for young people who completed our Safer Finances course developed in partnership with the Consumer Council and Northern Ireland Open College Network. We ran this pilot course with 30 young people from Ardoyne Youth Club, New Lodge Youth Centre and Ardoyne Youth Enterprise, and have since delivered the course to participants in a BTCNI employability programme.

Our achievements in numbers

In the last 3 years....

... we have been engaging and supporting young people:

- our youth team had nearly **6,000** street outreach engagements with young people
- over **250** young people went through our drop-in
- **344** young people participated in our summer intervention schemes

.... we have supported young people's personal and professional development:

- Over **150** young people participated in our personal development groups
- **77** young people were involved in good relations cross-community groups
- **58** young people went through our mentoring programme
- **360** young people, youth workers and community leaders achieved OCNNI certificates through our Centre (40 courses, 402 participants, 360 completed)
- **45** people became qualified youth workers through our OCNNI Level 2 Award course

.... we have championed diversity and inclusion:

- we supported over **250** BAME, migrants and refugees through our welcoming newcomers programme
- we had **588** participants in workshops on cultural diversity, migration, and asylum

..... we have supported communities during the pandemic:

- we collated, edited, and designed a guide to community response and crisis support services in North Belfast for North Belfast Advice Partnership, and an updated guide in 2021, distributed to **2,000** households through community groups and schools
- we distributed **772** activity kits and support packs,
- we organised **70** hot meals and 35 phone data vouchers to support young people and families,
- **58** children and young people participated in our lockdown talent show and writing competition,
- **158** senior citizens received Christmas cards from our young people, and over **3,000** people watched our virtual music festivals.



This work has included championing active participation in initiatives such as the North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme, which aims to enhance good relations throughout wider North Belfast as well as develop important capacity building programmes in the process.

These are just a few highlights from our good relations and inclusion work:

- Best practice study visits for youth and community practitioners to youth 'super centres'
- A mentoring programme for young people in Ardoyne and Greater Shankill in partnership with the R-City Project. The intensive mentoring programme for at-risk young people in Ardoyne and Shankill aims to build relationships and confidence. The programme helps to improve relationships, develop friendships, improve mental health and wellbeing, increase self-awareness and a better understanding of consequences of own behaviours as well as improve communications and provide more understanding of when to ask for support. In the last three years, we supported 58 young people through mentoring.
- A cross-community programme of youth leadership accredited training, which has involved a variety of partners – including North Belfast Alternatives, R-City, YEHA, Ardoyne Youth Club, Let Youth Lead, John Paul II Youth Club, Rathcoole Youth Centre, New Lodge Youth Centre, and Blessed Trinity College Belfast. Through this programme, 45 adults became qualified youth workers, and 83 young people achieved certificates in Youth Leadership, Mental Health Awareness, Diversity and Good Relations or Youth Justice. A central feature of most of these courses was their cross-community element. In learners' surveys conducted for this programme, 90% of respondents felt more confident that they could initiate positive change in their communities, 90% said they had gained a better understanding of diversity and equality issues, 80% made new friends from different community backgrounds and 95% felt more favourable towards people from other community backgrounds.
- A Welcoming Newcomers diversity and inclusion programme. In the last three years, this included 48 Small Worlds Workshops on migration and asylum for 588 participants and support for over 250 newcomers through days out, events, community transport, practical support, and support for North Belfast Friendship Club. 100% of newcomer respondents to our evaluations said the programme made them feel more welcome; over 95% of participants in our workshops said they helped them understand more about migration, asylum, and cultural diversity.
- A flagship good relations personal development programme for young people, MADE (Monkstown Ardoyne Diversity and Empowerment) with Monkstown



Small Worlds workshop at Our Lady's Primary School.

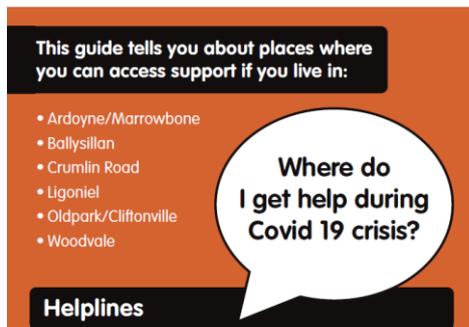
Boxing Club. This six-month programme supported 20 young men and 17 young women over the last three years.

- Initiatives supporting the inclusion of young women and BAME youth, such as the Uniting Opportunities programme run in partnership with Ashton Community Trust and New Lodge Arts, which focused on supporting mental health through creative activities (37 young people).
- A cross community personal development programme for young teens in partnership with R-City Engage group (40 young people).

Stepping up to support communities through the pandemic

The pandemic presented AYE, its members, young people and the community with many challenges. Like many organisations across North Belfast and beyond, we adapted our approach to meet the practical, financial, and emotional needs of the community.

We stepped up and helped our members and the wider community through our partnerships with the Community Foodbank, North Belfast Friendship Club, Belfast Friendship Club, Marrowbone Community House, North Belfast Foodbank etc... We distributed 772 activity kits, sunflower challenge growing kits and support packs, organised 70 hot meals and 35 phone data vouchers to support young people and families.



We published two guides that helped to co-ordinate the Covid 19 community response, ensuring households in Ardoyne, Ballysillan, Woodvale and wider North Belfast knew where to turn to for support.

We continued to support young people through the pandemic. We strived to keep spirits and morale high with our street outreach, online mentoring, outreach stalls, online creative group for young women with New Lodge Arts, online writing competition with Paul McVeigh, online talent show, virtual music festivals etc. 58 children and young people participated in our lockdown talent show and writing competition.

158 senior citizens received Christmas cards from our young people in the winter lockdown of 2020 and over 3,000 people watched our virtual music festivals.

Since March 2020, we've helped and supported over 3,000 people through our COVID-19 response work and remain committed to helping to rebuild young people and the community through the current cost of living crisis.

Growing and empowering our young people through ...

.... Volunteering

AYE has the support of between 5 and 30 amazing volunteers each year. Our volunteers are the lifeblood of AYE and without them, we could not do what we do. In the last three years, young volunteers have helped us run our summer intervention programmes, supported younger people in our youth groups, facilitated a workshop for University of Massachusetts Armagh Summer School, engaged in clean ups of Flax Street, our community garden, and Our Lady's Primary School.

Volunteers have also helped to make packs for the community foodbank and written cards for residents of the local care home. Volunteering schemes are an important part of our capacity building for young people, helping them to develop their leadership skills and providing a progression for participants in our personal development programmes.

..... training

We are incredibly proud of developing AYE into an OCNNI Accredited Centre and of providing a growing programme of accredited courses to support young people's personal development and employability and to help train a new generation of highly skilled youth workers. Over the past three years we have supported and trained 402 people in courses such as Youth Leadership, Diversity and Good Relations, Mentoring, Mental Health Awareness, Youth Work Practice, Inclusive Youth

Work for Children and Young People with ASD, Young People and Youth Justice, Drug Awareness, Safer Finances, Personal Motivation and Hair Styling to name a few.

During the pandemic, we developed online and hybrid versions of our courses to ensure everyone has access to any training they need.

We support youth and community groups in wider North Belfast through training partnerships where we provide training resources, tutor support, assessment, and internal verification. For example, during 2021-22, AYE completed 24 OCNNI courses for a total of 208 learners in partnership with Ardoyne Youth Club, New Lodge Youth Centre, R-City, Girls Brigade, Black Mountain Action Group, Spectrum Centre, Grace Family Centre, Trinity College, Harmoni, Consumer Council and North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme.



Certificates presentation for youth workers and young leaders at New Lodge Youth

.... supporting youth and community providers

We are also growing and supporting local groups and in the past three years we have supported over 30 groups through convening meetings to address common issues, social media training, Urban Villages communications support, information sharing, use of our office and garden space, training for outreach detached teams in the area, etc. For example, working in partnership with Ashton Community Trust and New Lodge Arts, we supported young women through a 12-week programme about mental health awareness and creativity.

Through our guide to community support services during Covid 19 crisis, we publicised the work of 79 youth and community groups based in Ardoyne, Marrowbone, Oldpark, Ballysillan, Cliftonville, Woodvale and wider North Belfast. We published the guide online and distributed over 2,000 copies of the paper edition together with North Belfast Advice Partnership.

... leading the way in innovative interventions and outreach support

An important part of our work is support for our members and partners in the sector, plugging the gaps identified and developing innovative pilot programmes that can be taken further by youth and community groups. Our outreach detached youth work grew from a need identified by the local community and youth clubs. We established a year-round street outreach team, with additional summer intervention programmes to support at-risk young people and encourage them to avail of youth services.

We were the lead project for extended outreach pilot programmes in the winter months of 2017-18 and 2018-19, in partnership with North Belfast Alternatives, Streetbeat, New Lodge Youth Centre and Ballysillan Youth for Christ. In these programmes, we coordinated a network of youth workers on the streets of Ardoyne, Ballysillan, Woodvale and New Lodge with support from Belfast City Council – helping thousands of young people each year.

These pilots demonstrated the importance of a coordinated approach in supporting young people, reducing risk, and easing tensions. We built on this to develop a one-year outreach project attached to local youth clubs – we helped design a brief and supported John Paul Youth Club, Ardoyne Youth Club and Marrowbone Youth Club to gain the joint contract. We provided training for the newly built team – the Empowering Young People Outreach Detached Project.



Trainees on our OCNNI Level 2 Award in Youth Work Practice

.... leadership development

Our catalogue of OCNNI courses is designed to offer a variety of personal development, well-being, and employability opportunities, but a large focus is to offer progression routes that enhance youth leadership and prepare young people to enter the world of youth work if they so desire.

Through the North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programmes, we provide OCNNI Level 2 award in

Youth Leadership, Level 2 Award in Youth Work Practice and Level 2 Award in Youth Justice. In addition, we offer courses for youth clubs and groups in mentoring skills and practice, personal motivation, exploring feelings and emotions, mental health, and wellbeing etc, all important skills for young leaders and youth workers.

In the last three years, 45 learners became qualified youth workers through our OCNNI Level 2 Award in Youth Work Practice.

We also develop our young leaders through progression routes that combine personal and social development, good relations, and volunteering. Emerge is an entry level personal development programme where young people are recruited through street outreach. Engage and MADE are the next level of personal development programme which combine good relations and personal development work for young people who are more familiar with youth groups.

Other groups, such as Her Voice young women's group and previous years' Older Lads Group, emerge from needs identified by young people who have gone through our programmes and who want to further develop their employability, youth leadership or personal self-confidence. All focus on empowering the young people and encouraging them to seek further opportunities. Our young volunteers are drawn from these programmes, although some are young people seeking youth work training opportunities.

In addition, our youth work practice focuses on co-designing programmes with our young people, and this strengthens their capacity to develop as young leaders and as positive voices for their communities. Our personal development programmes start with consultation sessions where young people choose the topics they want covered, the issues they are facing and the development and skills they want to gain. Some groups, such as Monkstown Ardoyne Diversity and Empowerment Programme (MADE), have specific requirements but we co-design the content in partnership with young people, and ensure some sessions are entirely youth led.

... consulting young people and giving them a voice

We consulted with young people to help improve services for the area and to feed back to statutory organisations on what is needed to develop thriving youth centred communities.

In 2017, we surveyed 151 young people in Ardoyne and Marrowbone and 15 youth workers to get a snapshot of what they saw as the most important youth and community issues and the solutions they envisaged. We used this to inform our priorities for action and develop further research. We also saw this as an opportunity to give young people a voice which they are rarely given in grassroots community development. This was published in a report 'Listen Up, AYE Youth Survey 2017.'

We followed this up with Speak Up Ardoyne and Marrowbone, a collection of short interviews of children, young people, and adults in the area, involving young women in the film making and editing process.

We conducted follow-up mini surveys of young people as part of our extended outreach pilot programmes, surveying them on youth community safety issues.

In 2019, we published 'Get Your Voice Heard', a report from an AYE Matter event with young people as the main speakers and where the youth audience was surveyed on their priorities for themselves and their communities. AYE Matter was a series of events where key-note speakers addressed issues such as children's human rights, the post-ceasefire generation, and young people as community leaders.

We are developing this further by putting together an area youth committee. We have asked local youth centres to each put forward two representatives.

Aligning with key strategic policies

The successful implementation of our mission ‘to maximise the opportunities and resources available to children and young people through an inclusive and strategic approach to developing and delivering youth participation and youth services’ will support core elements of the Outcomes Based Framework outlined within the Programme for Government and the 2030 Belfast Agenda.

The table below shows how our strategic priorities and work align with key devolved and local government policies.

| Our impacts | | | We contribute to | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Vision (Goal) | Mission (Impact) | Outcomes | Programme for Govt. (PfG) 2021* | Belfast Agenda 2030 Plan |
| Linking youth with opportunities to build stronger communities | AYE is dedicated to maximising the opportunities and resources available to children and young people through an inclusive and strategic approach to developing and delivering youth participation and youth services. | <i>A thriving Youth & Community Hub and sustainable AYE</i> | 2) We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment. 3) We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect. 4) We all enjoy long, healthy active lives. 5) Everyone can reach their potential. | 1) A city where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy 2) A city that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all |
| | | <i>Driving service innovation, creating strong, connected youth people and communities</i> | 1) Our children and young people have the best start in life. 2) We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment. 3) We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect. | 3) a city that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable |
| | | <i>Engaged and empowered children and young people</i> | 4) We all enjoy long, healthy active lives. 5) Everyone can reach their potential. | 4) a city where everyone experiences good health and well-being |
| | | <i>A thriving AYE delivering change through strong strategic partnerships</i> | 6) Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other. 7) We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives. | 5) A city where everyone fulfils their potential. |
| <i>A robust governance, leadership and operating model supported by a strong community stakeholder engagement group.</i> | | | | |

*At the time of developing this strategy, the draft 2021 Programme for Government outcomes had not been formally agreed but this document remains the core policy document from which other strategies and action plans align to.

Our long term plans

Strategic Ambition 1 – Building a strong AYE to support young people and our members

Outcome

A thriving Youth & Community Hub and sustainable AYE

Our aim

Build a strong and sustainable infrastructure capable of supporting dynamic services, connecting, and engaging members, championing good relations and developing partnerships through a thriving Youth & Community Hub.

Priorities for 2023 - 2026

We will:

- Work towards developing an evaluation framework that captures all the successes and impact of the work we do
- Source and secure the funding necessary to fully deliver the new Youth & Community Hub
- Ensure there is strong governance procedures in place, including a regular review of policies and procedures
- Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are champions through a review and refresh of AYE's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Good Relations plan
- Review and refresh AYE's operating model to ensure the organisation can manage the new build (as per the business plan), monitor, and evaluate impact and ensure the infrastructure and resources are in place to ensure the voices of young people drive the priorities of the organisation
- Develop a project management team to develop and deliver all key elements required to successfully open and operate a new Youth & Community Hub
- Undertake a workforce review to ensure AYE has the staff complement and structure to deliver its aims and objectives
- Develop and begin delivery of a new proactive, co-ordinated marketing and communication strategy to promote our building, services, work and impact

- Engage effectively and meaningfully with local young people and all key stakeholders to ensure the needs and priorities of the local community are met through AYE's work
- Learn from examples of good practice across Northern Ireland to develop a sustainable income generation model for the organisation
- Identify and secure infrastructure and operational needs and costings to deliver all work streams within the Strategy
- Develop and maintain a new model of income generation to support the work, vision, and mission of the organisation.



commercial & public space
 There is a raised concrete space opposite the site at the apex of the Woodvale Rd (image right); with many commercial units appearing vacant (at least five) although only one is publicly for sale. The large Sports Man Bar is expected to be converted into social housing.

Making plans for a new Youth & Community Hub



Strategic Ambition 2 – **Strong and connected** members delivering great services and leadership for young people

Outcome

A supported and connected membership, driving service innovation for young people.

Our aim

Working in partnership with members and young people to create an innovative, inclusive, and strategic approach to youth participation and service delivery.

Priorities for 2023 - 2026

We will:

- Define the role and relationship of AYE with its membership
- Expand AYE memberships through recruiting new members and retaining existing members
- Ensure an effective and relevant membership package is in place
- Promote diversity and inclusion in AYE membership in line with the findings from the EDI review and new EDI and good relations strategy
- Provide operational and strategic support to AYE's members
- Provide members with accurate, timely and relevant information, through the most cost-effective methods
- Working with members, young people and volunteers, co-design the volunteer journey for AYE
- Develop and deliver with the membership and young people an area wide youth development plan
- Organise several key services pilots or projects within youth development with the aim of assessing and scaling up if successful and impactful.

AYE Welcoming
Newcomers day out
with Ard Eoin Ciceams.



Strategic Ambition 3 – Engaged and empowered young people

Outcome

Engaged and empowered young people equipped to reach their full potential and to contribute to positive community leadership

Our aim

Working alongside young people, we will identify individual and collective needs and help support all young people to reach their full potential.

Priorities for 2023 - 2026

We will:

- Identify and support young leaders through volunteering and training
- Support young people to develop a youth bank aimed at providing young people with transferable skills for future employment
- Ensure AYE's work is driven by young people, by designing and developing engagement infrastructure and processes which will engage, listen, and respond to the needs and priorities of young people within the local community
- Regularly assess the needs of young people with the aim of providing further evidence to develop policy and service interventions
- Deliver a programme of engagement activity aimed at providing opportunities to help young people identify and remove barriers to reaching their full potential
- Through co-production, identify and develop key programmes of developmental work to assist young people to achieve their goals
- Working with young people, support the establishment and maintenance of a Youth Forum and advocacy plan with the aim of influencing the current and future priorities of AYE and youth development
- Continue to create opportunities through AYE to foster and build good community and race relations with all stakeholders
- Enable young people to have access to key skills for leadership development.



Engage group
with RCity

Strategic Ambition 4 – Stronger together

Outcome

A thriving AYE delivering change through strong strategic partnerships

Our aim

Through a stronger and engaged network we will build key partnerships to develop and deliver a need based and strategic approach to youth services and community development

Priorities for 2023 - 2026

We will:

- Undertake an audit of current partnerships in line with future requirements as outlined within AYE's strategic priorities
- Conduct a mapping exercise of stakeholders and develop a stakeholder engagement plan to support the new strategic priorities
- In line with AYE's strategic priorities, identify and develop collaborations and partnerships with organisations across the private, public and community and voluntary sectors to further champion innovation within youth participation and service delivery
- Explore and secure funding opportunities for AYE's partnerships on an area-wide basis
- Working alongside young people, engage with key political and statutory stakeholders with the aim of ensuring innovation and best practice in youth development are adopted into practice in line with the needs of young people.



AYE Youth and Community Providers meeting 'Covid-19 style' in 2021.

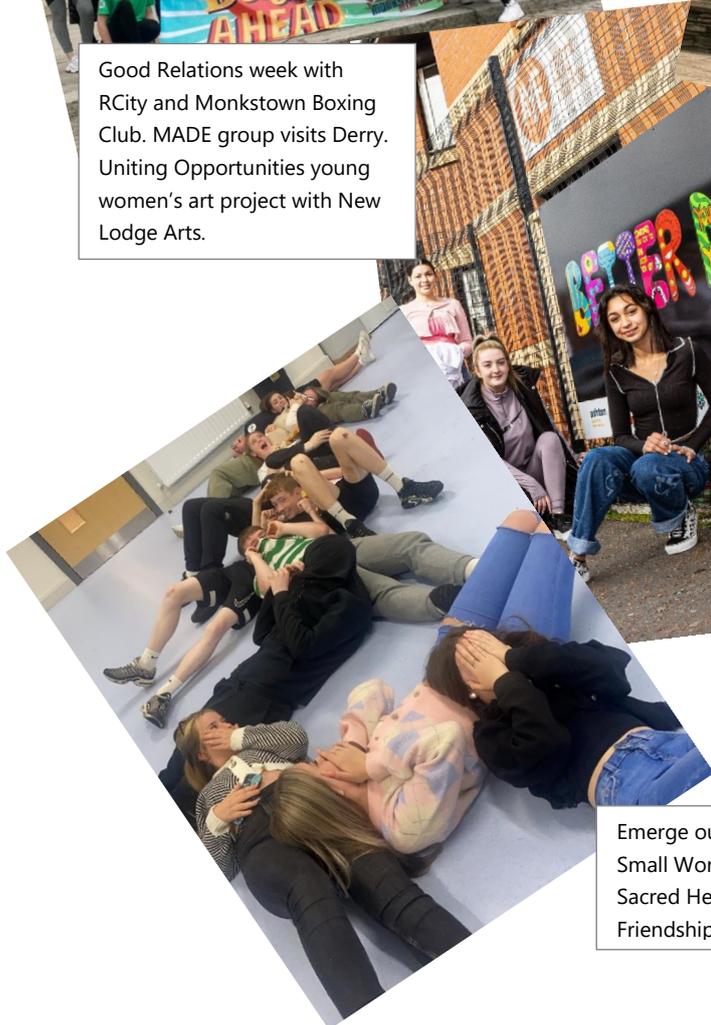
Measuring success

As outlined within the policy context, AYE has established outcomes that are aligned to the new Programme for Government and Belfast Agenda, Belfast City Council’s Community Plan. Each outcome will have a series of key performance indicators (KPIs) which will help measure impact and success. Each KPI will be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound) supporting both outputs and outcomes.

In addition, AYE will work towards developing an evaluation framework that captures all the successes and impact of the work we do. This will include regular feedback from our service users.



Good Relations week with RCity and Monkstown Boxing Club. MADE group visits Derry. Uniting Opportunities young women’s art project with New Lodge Arts.



Emerge outreach group. Small Worlds workshop at Sacred Heart PS with Belfast Friendship Club.





Linking YOUTH with opportunities
to build stronger communities



AYE Multicultural
family fun day at
Marrowbone
Community House

Contact us

Address: Ardoyne Youth Enterprise, 11a Flax Street, Belfast BT14 7EJ

Phone: 028 9074 1479

Web: www.ardoyne.org

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