
Ardoyne Youth Enterprise

Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Linking YOUTH with
opportunities to build
stronger communities



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



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

Front cover: youth workers and volunteer on outreach detached walk through Ardoyne.

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.



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.



Summer intervention programme cross-community fun day out

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.



Good Relations week with RCity and Monkstown Boxing Club. AYE networking meeting for youth and community providers at NBWISP (North Belfast Women's Initiative and Support Project).



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to build stronger communities



AYE Multicultural
family fun day at
Marrowbone
Community House

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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