Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Outline progress and/or any reversal of progress on implementation in 2011:

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs provides grant-in-aid funding to the Youth Work Sector which actively works with young people outside, yet alongside, the formal education sector. The programmes operated by the voluntary youth work organisations vary widely. Qualities and skills such as leadership, co-operation, decision-making, motivation, and self-responsibility are acquired by young people through voluntary participation in this non-formal learning process. In addition, Youth Work often acts as the point of contact and referral in the interface with other youth-related services spanning the realms of care, health, and welfare.

The National Youth Health Programme NYHP is a partnership between the National Youth Council of Ireland, the Health Service Executive and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The aim of the programme is to provide a broad-based, flexible health promotion / education support and training service to youth organisations and to all those working with young people in out-of-school settings. The programme has sought to develop the capacity of the sector and organisations to advocate on issues that affect young people and develop evidenced based resources and trainings to support that work.

This work is achieved through the development of programmes specifically for and with youth organisations throughout the country and the provision of training and support for workers and volunteers who implement these programmes.

The training provided aims to enhance the professional and personal development of the youth worker. Opportunities are provided where participants can develop skills, gain knowledge and critically examine the attitudes which can enhance their own health and well-being and those with whom they work. The training courses cover a broad range of specific health issues and generic health promotion theory.

Training Provided 2011:

- Specialist Certificate in Youth Health Promotion Accredited by NUI Galway, 5 Blocks of 3 days - 18 Participants
- Mental Health Promotion: MindOUT
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST): Participants
- SafeTALK Suicide Awareness
- Managing Psychosis in the Youth Work sector
- Building Self Esteem
- Introducing Mindfulness to the Youth Sector
- Managing Challenging encounters / Defusing Anger
- Healthy Eating Active Living
• Relationships & Sexuality Education / B4U Decide:
• Drugs & Alcohol
• 3 regional seminars on Youth mental Health Promotion:
  TOTAL: 53 Training Events over 87 days delivered to 1060 Participants

Health Quality Mark

The Health Quality Mark (HQM) is a set of quality standards in youth health promotion and takes the form of an award conferred on organisations that satisfy agreed quality criteria. The HQM uses the Settings approach to health promotion which encourages and facilitates youth organisations to develop and deliver a “whole organisational approach” to promoting health rather than addressing individual risk factors. This happens at four distinct levels:
  • Creating Supportive environments,
  • Policy development,
  • Partnerships with others
  • Personal skills/health education.

The aim of the HQM is to develop and sustain quality youth health promotion in youth organisations. A new support manual was published in 2011 to support this process and complement the National Quality Standards Framework for youth for youth work. 40 youth organisations currently hold HQM awards at various levels, and are supported by the programme by staff training, policy development and site visits.

Healthy Eating Active Living Resource

The National Youth Health Programme and the Irish Heart Foundation formed a partnership to develop a Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) resource for the youth sector. The resource aims to equip youth workers with the skills necessary to create a healthy eating; active living environment in their organisation by providing information on health education, healthy eating, active living policy guidelines and key contact information. The resource is disseminated at training events and through HSE health promotion officers.

Irish Youth Health Promotion Bibliography

In 2011 a user-friendly bibliography of health promotion research in the youth work sector was developed in conjunction with Health programme Health promotion research centre in NUI Galway. The accompanying report identifies gaps in Irish research on youth health promotion in the youth work sector. This bibliography will be invaluable for health practitioners, youth workers and researchers alike and would assist in the further development of this important research area. The Bibliography and report is available from www.youthhealth.ie