



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Briefing Paper

Paper 26/15

28th January 2015

NIAR 905-14

Caroline Perry

Education Other than at School and youth work

Summary

This briefing paper considers Education Other than at School (EOTAS) – education for children who cannot otherwise access appropriate provision, and youth work in Northern Ireland, particularly in regard to curriculum and inspection.

Education Other than at School

EOTAS provision is not designed as a standalone alternative to school. Instead, it aims to meet specific needs and help young people overcome barriers to learning, particularly social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) may choose to provide such services directly, or purchase places externally. Around 600 young people attended EOTAS centres in 2012-13.

Pupils in EOTAS settings are entitled to access the full curriculum and the same standards must be applied as in mainstream education. Schools are expected to contribute to the learning opportunities within an EOTAS placement and retain responsibility for registered pupils. A standard teaching day may include:

- Group teaching and one-to-one tuition;
- E-learning provision;

- Support to meet SEBD needs;
- Attendance at a local school or college.

All EOTAS settings are subject to regular inspections. The Chief Inspector's Report has suggested that there is a need for capacity building in schools to meet the increasing number of young people with mental health and anxiety-based conditions. It also found that EOTAS settings need to develop more effective links with schools.

Youth provision

The youth sector in Northern Ireland consists of a statutory sector comprising 108 facilities and 11 outdoor education centres, and a voluntary sector incorporating over 1,700 organisations. Over a third of the population aged between four and 25 are involved in youth work.

Youth work is intended to complement formal education, and the Department of Education notes that it plays an important role by encouraging learning in a non-formal setting and by developing young people's personal and social skills.

A curriculum framework for youth work was developed in 1997 and updated in 2003, with no current plans to revise it. The framework is not statutory or prescriptive and aims to provide flexibility for organisations to develop their own approach, guided by a number of core values and principles.

Statutory youth services and voluntary provision in receipt of funding from the Department are subject to inspection by ETI. Currently, inspections are conducted on a seven year cycle, and ETI is developing a risk-based approach. Inspections include those of individual centres as well as youth area inspections assessing all full-time provision within a geographical area.

1 Introduction

Education Other than at School (EOTAS) provides education for children with social, emotional, behavioural, medical or other issues, who cannot otherwise access suitable education. It allows children who have been expelled or suspended from their school, or have otherwise disengaged with it, to participate in education:¹

- Until they achieve a new school place;
- Until they are prepared for re-entry to an existing school place; or
- To maintain their education until compulsory school leaving age.

¹ Department of Education (2012) *Education Other than at School* [online] Available at: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/pupils-parents-newpage.htm>

The Department of Education invests in youth work in Northern Ireland with the aim of helping children and young people to reach their potential. This briefing paper provides an overview of EOTAS and youth work, including curriculum and inspection.

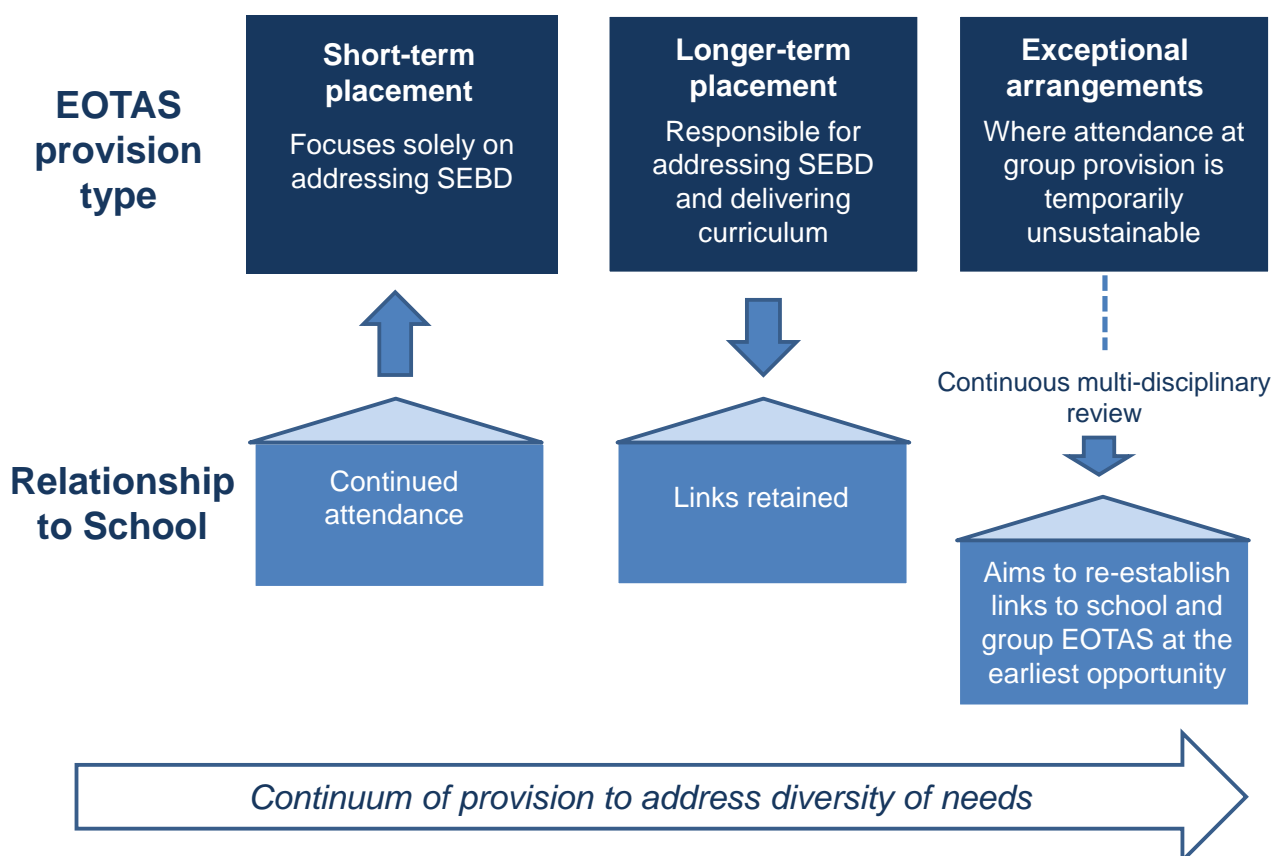
2 Overview of EOTAS

The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have a statutory duty to provide access to education for young people who cannot otherwise receive suitable provision.² In 2012-13, around 600 young people attended EOTAS centres.³

The Department of Education published guidance in 2014 clarifying the legislation and detailing the minimum requirements for EOTAS provision; this will take effect from 2015-16. The guidance notes that the best place for young people to receive their education is in a mainstream or Special School. EOTAS provision is designed to meet specific pupil needs and is not intended as a standalone alternative.⁴

EOTAS focuses on helping young people to overcome barriers to learning, particularly social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), as well as supporting educational progress.

Figure 1: The three main types of EOTAS provision⁵



² The Education (NI) Order 1998, Article 86 (1)

³ Education and Training Inspectorate (2014) *The Chief Inspector's Report 2012-2014* Bangor: ETI

⁴ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: Department of Education

⁵ Adapted from: Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: Department of Education

ELBs are the only organisations that may determine placement. Pupils and their parents or guardians must have input to the decision-making process and consent to the referral. The type of placement is chosen on the basis of an assessment of the pupil's needs.⁶

The placement must be in the pupil's best interests, and should only be considered when school-based interventions have been attempted and failed (although in exceptional circumstances rapid transfer into EOTAS may be required for safeguarding). EOTAS should aim to address students' barriers to learning and support their reintegration into a mainstream school wherever possible.⁷

Alternative education providers

ELBs may choose whether to provide education for children who cannot attend school directly, or by purchasing suitable provision from an external organisation. The ELB must ensure that any external provider meets the standards and principles set out within the departmental guidance, and must monitor the delivery of services.⁸

3 EOTAS curriculum and learning

Within all types of EOTAS provision pupils' learning and development needs must be met effectively and to the same standards as in mainstream education. Pupils in EOTAS are entitled to access the full curriculum. However, the guidance notes that a reduced curriculum may be appropriate, but that this may only be provided on the basis of a pupil's assessed needs and abilities.⁹

The guidance states that the standard teaching day in an EOTAS setting should comprise four and a half hours of tuition across two sessions; and that students should receive 190 days of teaching annually. This could include a mixture of:¹⁰

- Group teaching;
- One-to-one tuition;
- E-learning provision;
- Support to meet SEBD needs;
- Attendance at another educational centre (e.g. local school or college).

Education Plan

Each pupil in EOTAS must have an individual Education Plan (EP) detailing educational targets and personal development goals. The plan is written by the head of

⁶ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: Department of Education

⁷ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: Department of Education

⁸ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: DE

⁹ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: DE

¹⁰ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: DE

the EOTAS centre in consultation with staff from the pupil's registered school. Pupils and parents should also be involved in its development and should agree its content.¹¹

While developing the EP, the school and centre agree a programme based on assessed need. It should detail the reasons why any reductions in the curriculum have been made. However, the minimum curriculum that must be provided includes:¹²

- Literacy;
- Numeracy;
- ICT;
- Vocational Education; and
- Appropriate Personal and Social Development.

The plan outlines the pupil's registered school's contribution to their learning. This could include providing access to subjects not available within the EOTAS placement, for example science, technology, physical education and e-learning opportunities.¹³

Role of the school

The pupil's registered school retains responsibility for them and is expected to maintain regular contact to ensure their pastoral and academic needs are being met, and to contribute to the mixture of learning opportunities available. It must also report the pupil's progress to the parents or guardians, based on reports provided by the EOTAS setting.¹⁴

Schools are required to report the educational outcomes of pupils in EOTAS placements in line with reporting on all pupils, at the end of all Key Stages. Where a child has been expelled or is not registered at a school for other reasons, the ELB takes on many of the school's responsibilities.¹⁵

EOTAS settings have reported that they are experiencing an increase in the number of young people with mental health and anxiety-based conditions. *The Chief Inspector's Report 2012-14* states that this is indicative of a need to build capacity in schools to support young people with these issues.¹⁶

¹¹ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: DE

¹² Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: DE

¹³ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: DE

¹⁴ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: DE

¹⁵ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: DE

¹⁶ Education and Training Inspectorate (2014) *The Chief Inspector's Report 2012-2014* Bangor: ETI

4 Inspection arrangements

All recognised EOTAS centres are subject to inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Community EOTAS settings which currently have no Board funded places are also subject to inspection.¹⁷

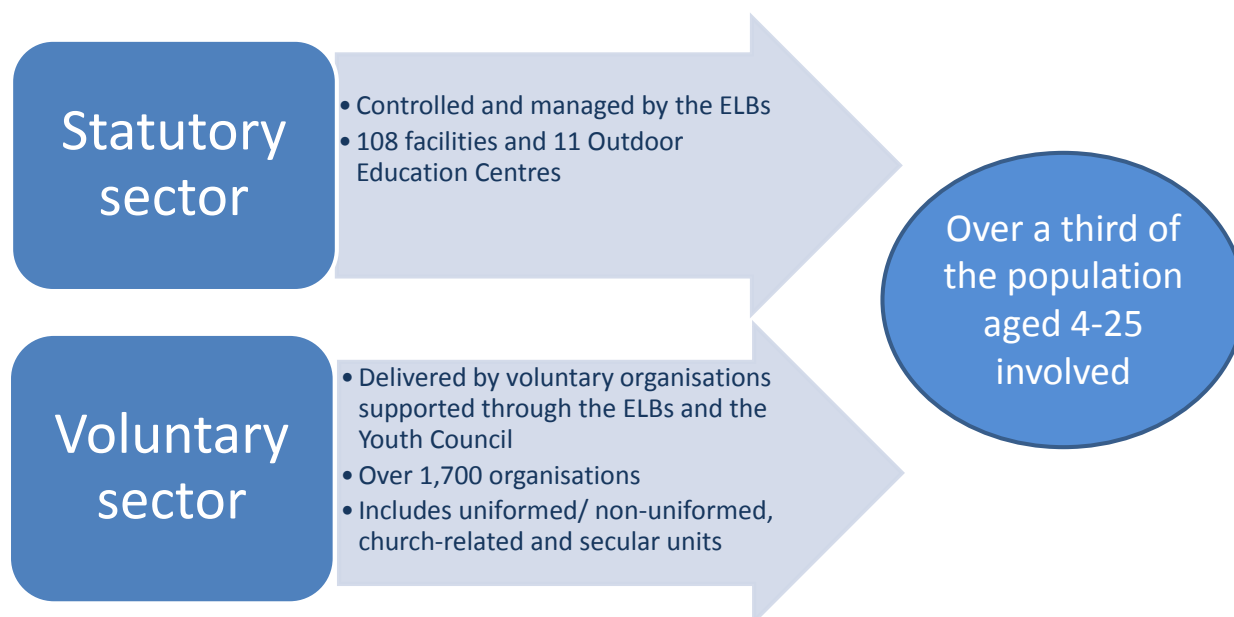
An inspection typically lasts three to four days, with evidence gathered over two or three days, followed by moderation and feedback. Evaluation focuses on the pupils' achievements and standards; the quality of provision and the quality of leadership and management.¹⁸

The Chief Inspector's Report 2012-14 found that the overall quality of provision in 71% of providers inspected was good or better. However, it noted that EOTAS and alternative provision settings need to develop more effective links with schools, planning the personal education programme and targets for young people together.¹⁹

5 Youth work

The Department of Education's investment in youth work aims to support and encourage young people to reach their potential.

Figure 2: Overview of the youth sector in Northern Ireland²⁰



Examples of organisations and projects within the youth sector include full-time youth centres, one night per week clubs, health projects, special programmes for ethnic minorities, young men and young mothers, environmental projects and helplines.²¹

¹⁷ Information provided by the Department of Education, January 2015

¹⁸ Education and Training Inspectorate (2014) *Types of Inspection*

¹⁹ Education and Training Inspectorate (2014) *The Chief Inspector's Report 2012-2014* Bangor: ETI

²⁰ Department of Education (2013) *Priorities for Youth* Bangor: DE

²¹ YouthWork NI (2003) *Youth Work: A model for effective practice* Antrim: YouthWork NI

Role in relation to compulsory education

The Department of Education states that youth work should complement formal education: remaining distinct from it while linking with broad education priorities.²²

“Non-formal education in the form of youth work is an important part of education as it encourages children and young people’s participation to develop their personal and social skills, encouraging them to engage or re-engage in positive learning within a non-formal setting.”

Department of Education (2013) *Priorities for Youth*

Priorities for Youth states that while youth work is less formal than school education, it is no less important in terms of learning and development. It details some of the potential outcomes of youth work, including:²³

- Helping young people to **identify their development needs**;
- Providing opportunities to **build self-esteem**, work as part of a team and socialise;
- Providing **structured activities** within a safe environment;
- Developing **mutual understanding** and respect for others;
- Promoting recognition of, and respect for, **cultural diversity**.

Youth work is thought to be relevant to all young people, but particularly to those who may become disaffected and disengaged from school and society, those at risk of committing an offence, and those affected by the legacy of the conflict.²⁴

6 Youth service curriculum

Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice provides a curriculum framework for the delivery of youth work. This was developed in 1997 and updated in 2003. Participation in youth work is voluntary; therefore the curriculum is not statutory.²⁵ There are no current plans to update the framework.²⁶

The framework is intended to provide flexibility for providers to develop approaches best suited to their target group’s particular needs, and is not prescriptive. Factors determining an individual organisation’s needs include:²⁷

²² Department of Education (2013) *Priorities for Youth* Bangor: DE

²³ Department of Education (2013) *Priorities for Youth* Bangor: DE

²⁴ Department of Education (2013) *Priorities for Youth* Bangor: DE

²⁵ Department of Education (2013) *Priorities for Youth* Bangor: DE

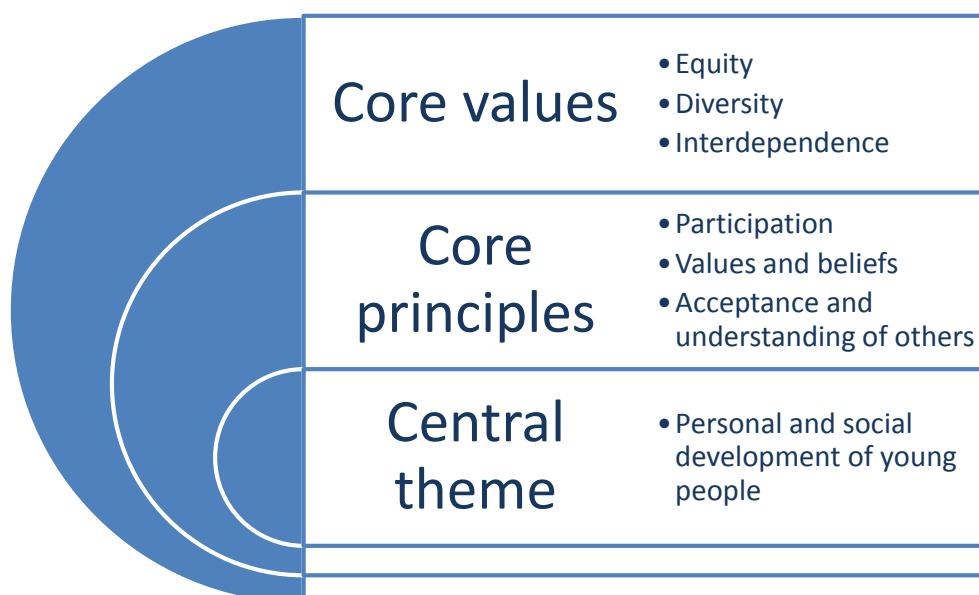
²⁶ Information provided by the Department of Education, January 2015

²⁷ YouthWork NI (2003) *Youth Work: A model for effective practice* Antrim: YouthWork NI

- Age range;
- Nature and size of the group;
- Facilities and resources available;
- Knowledge and skills of those involved in making the provision.

Figure 3 illustrates the central theme, principles and values of the “model for effective practice” for youth provision outlined in the guidance. It is recommended that youth work is planned, implemented and evaluated around these, and they form the foundation of a curriculum that may be simplified or elaborated. The guidance states that some organisations will not find it necessary to use the model.²⁸

Figure 3: Key aspects of the model for effective practice in youth provision²⁹



7 Inspection of youth provision

ETI currently inspects statutory and voluntary youth provision funded by the Department of Education. It aims to inspect youth provision that has full-time time workers funded by the Department on a seven year cycle. ETI is developing a risk-based approach to youth inspections, in line with that employed for schools.³⁰

However, the ELBs have reorganised many full-time projects and centres, merging some older provision or reducing it to part-time, and creating new projects. The Department reports that this has had an impact on the frequency of inspection, and that

²⁸ YouthWork NI (2003) *Youth Work: A model for effective practice* Antrim: YouthWork NI

²⁹ Adapted from YouthWork NI (2003) *Youth Work: A model for effective practice* Antrim: YouthWork NI

³⁰ Information provided by the Department of Education, January 2015

the ETI is seeking to prioritise new provision that has not been inspected in the previous seven years.³¹

Inspections focus on the quality of provision; young people's achievements and standards and the quality of leadership and management. Inspections are conducted as follows:

- **Youth centre** inspection: a five day block inspection;
- **Outdoor education centre** inspection: usually a ten day block model;
- **Youth area inspection**: usually a ten day block model, focusing on a division or geographical area of youth service within an ELB. All full-time provision in the area is inspected incorporating a sample of large part-time and voluntary units.

Evaluation of provision

Inspection evidence paints a mostly positive picture of youth provision, with 92% of settings inspected in 2012-14 evaluated as good or better. *The Chief Inspector's Report* also highlights the ongoing development of partnerships between the youth and compulsory education sectors as positive, noting that this enables young people to make connections across their educational experiences.³²

There is also evidence that young people have used transferable skills and accreditation from their involvement in youth work to progress into other education and training opportunities.³³

8 Annex: EOTAS and other alternative education providers

Table 1 details the EOTAS and other alternative education providers currently available in Northern Ireland.

The Department notes that a new setting has recently been established, the Oasis Youthways Project in Antrim. The organisation works with young people who have disengaged from education and wishes for the NEELB to use its EOTAS places, however, NEELB has not purchased EOTAS provision from this provider.

³¹ Information provided by the Department of Education, January 2015

³² Education and Training Inspectorate (2014) *The Chief Inspector's Report 2012-2014* Bangor: ETI

³³ Education and Training Inspectorate (2014) *The Chief Inspector's Report 2012-2014* Bangor: ETI

Table 1: EOTAS and other alternative education providers in Northern Ireland

Education and Library Board	Provider	Location
BELB	Glenmona Resource Centre (Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and De La Salle)	Glen Road, Belfast
	Iveagh Centre (Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, Eastern Board and Glenveagh School)	Broadway, Belfast
	Loughshore Education Resource Centre	Shore Road, Belfast
	The Link Centre SPSS	Barrack Street, Belfast
	TOPS (staffed by Belfast Hospital School) BELB	Barrack Street, Belfast
	Newstart Education Centre (Community based)	Dunlewey Street, Belfast
	Conway Education Centre (Community based)	Conway Street, Belfast
	Pathways - three sites (Community based)	Nelson Street, Belfast York Street, Belfast, Shankill Road, Belfast
	Open Doors (Not directly funded but can be used by BELB)	Barrack Street, Belfast
NEELB	Ballymena EOTAS Central Area	Carnlough Road, Broughshane
	Newtownabbey/Carrick EOTAS - Southern Area EOTAS Centre	Rathcoole Drive, Newtownabbey

Education and Library Board	Provider	Location
	Coleraine EOTAS (Drumard) - Northern Area EOTAS Centre	Tamlaght Road Upperlands, Maghera
	Leagreen Primary Referral Unit	Glenvarna Drive, Glengormley
	Newtownabbey Educational Guidance Centre	Jordanstown Road, Newtownabbey
	Rathmore Educational Guidance Centre	Loughanmore Road, Dunadry
	Sunlea Educational Guidance Centre	Ballycastle Road, Coleraine
	Thornberry Pupil Referral Unit	Ballycastle Road, Coleraine
SEELB	Beechcroft Education Unit (CAMHS)	Saintfield Road, Belfast
	Castlereagh AEP	Merok Park, Belfast
	Downpatrick AEP	Saul Road
	Groomsport Intensive Support Learning Unit	Springwell Drive, Groomsport
	Redburn	Old Hollywood Road
	Lagan Valley AEP (Community Provider)	Colin Green, Poleglass

Education and Library Board	Provider	Location
SELB	The Kinnego Centre	Lislasly Road, Dungannon
	Lough Road Primary Pupil Referral Unit - Lough Road KS3 Junior EOTAS (also caters for KS2 pupils), Lough Road KS4 EOTAS	Lough Road, Lurgan
	Newry KS4 EOTAS	Dominic Street, Newry
	Tamnamore Learning Centre	Tamnamore Road, Dungannon
WELB	Laurel Centre	Maydown Road, Derry/ Londonderry
	EOTAS Enniskillen, Shanmullagh Support Unit: Group Access for KS3 & KS4 AEP	Ballinamallard
	EOTAS Limavady - LEAP Support Unit	Limavady
	EOTAS Strabane - Knockavoe Support Unit	Strabane
	Longtower Youth & Community Centre	Anne Street, Derry/ Londonderry
WELB	EDIT (Education Intensive Therapy)	Rosstown Road, Derry/ Londonderry