

INTERIM REVIEW

Bunclody Youth Connections 2020/2021



Part of Bunclody Local Area Plan 2019/2021
August 2021

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wwetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Phort Láirge agus Loch Garman
Waterford and Wexford
Education and Training Board

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Background

The Bunclody Local Area Plan (LAP) Team had their first meeting on Thursday 30th May 2019, led by Fran Kennedy, Adult Education Officer.

Following a number of LAP Team meetings, it became clear that young members of the travelling community were not the only young people in Bunclody with the potential for early school leaving.

Once this need emerged Liz Duffy, Adult Education Officer with responsibility for Youth drafted a programme which developed into the Bunclody Youth Connections.

A committee was formed for the purpose of overseeing, monitoring and reviewing the project.

Committee Membership:-

Liz Duffy	Adult Education Officer, <i>Youth Services</i>
Fran Kennedy	Adult Education Officer, <i>Community</i>
Margaret Kinsella	Home School Completion Liaison, <i>Bunclody Vocational School</i>
Sarah Lavan	Community Education Facilitator
Linda Livingstone	Adult Educator

Aim and Strategic Priorities of Bunclody Youth Connections

- The aim of the programme very much depended upon the individual young people who attended.
- It was expected the programme would support these young people back into full time attendance at their current school, or it may be a stepping-stone for them into a FET provision programme such as Youthreach.
- In line with the expected FET Strategic Priorities, this programme will foster inclusion by prioritising target cohort of potential early school leavers and create pathways by either returning to school or from school to FET programmes.

Target Group

- Learners who were at risk of leaving school early
- Learners with reduced or sporadic attendance who have anxiety, low confidence, and or mental health issues
- Learners who would normally attend the WWETB local secondary school in 3rd to 5th year.
- Minimum number in group 6, maximum number 8.

Programme Content and Delivery Timetable

- Part time QQI Level 3 accredited programme
- Bronze Gaisce Award
- Delivered over two sessions a week – Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 1.00pm to 4.00pm, following the school calendar of Bunclody VC, in the Bunclody Further Education and Training Centre. A healthy snack to be provide at each session.

Key Point Indicators

Programme Aims	Programme Outcomes
The aim of the programme very much depended upon the individual young people who attended.	Two QQI Level 3 modules were delivered with a practical theme
It was expected the programme would support these young people back into full time attendance at their current school, or it may be a stepping-stone for them into a FET provision programme such as Youthreach.	One learner returned to school full time Three leaners have signed up for Youthreach Programme
In line with the expected FET Strategic Priorities, this programme will foster inclusion by prioritising target cohort of potential early school leavers and create pathways by either returning to school or from school to FET programmes.	Potential Early School Leavers were targeted 17% of learners have returned to school 50% of learners have signed up for a Youthreach Programme 33% of learners discontinued their attendance

Bunclody Youth Connections Programme Delivery

The programme began in Bunclody Further Education and Training FET Centre two afternoons a week in September 2020 following initial applications, interviews and assessment of learners.

Six female learners began the programme.

Due to Covid-19 pandemic the programme was forced to move to remote learning between January 2021 and March 2021.

The Adult Educator emailed work and printed packs every week for learners who could access email during this time.

Unfortunately, online learning was not an option for some learners. Two of them did not have internet access and those with English as their second language were not suited to online learning because of the language barrier.

Several times a week the Adult Educator contacted each learner explaining the work to them and answering any questions they had. Also checking in through their parents once a week to find out how they were handling remote learning.

For this cohort of learners, this method worked very well, and they managed to keep up with their QQI modules and GAISCE activities.

The Adult Educator worked closely together during these months to keep the learners engaged and motivated.

Outcomes

Year 1 - 2020/2021 - The Community Education programme sponsored Bunclody Youth Connections.

For the first year of this two-year pilot programme the majority of outcomes have been very positive.

- ✓ 6 learners began Bunclody Youth Connections in September 2020
- ✓ 4 learners finished the programme
- ✓ 4 learners will gain certification in 2 Level 3 QQI Modules
- ✓ 4 learners will receive Bronze Gaisce awards
- ✓ 1 Learner returned to school full time
- ✓ 3 Learners have signed up for Youthreach Programme
- ✓ 2 Learners did not finish the programme*

- ✓ The relationship between the school personnel and the FET personnel has ensured a second programme will be delivered.
- ✓ An unexpected outcome is the connection made with the parents of the young people. One family linked in with adult English language classes.

**Covid 19 had a detrimental effect for these learners, on-line remote learning was not an option due to family and financial circumstances.*

Bunclody Youth Connections Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- The criteria for learner selection incorporated those who were failing/struggling to attend school. These learners were given an opportunity to engage with a programme within a small group offering specific focused attention to their needs.
- For half of the learners engaging with this programme this was the only educational experience they were participating in as they were not attending school.
- The strong school engagement with this programme allowed for transparency and unity among Bunclody Vocational College and Further Education and Training in supporting the learner's educational achievement.
- The flexibility of the programme and the flexibility of the programme facilitator to accommodate the specific needs of the learners was a huge bonus.
- The regular collaboration between the programme facilitator and Bunclody Vocational College HSCL allowed learners to experience a unified support network which facilitated their learning experience.
- The buy-in from parents was a huge pull factor in ensuring that learner engagement was maintained.
- The practical element of the course allowed for hands on engagement which learners thoroughly enjoyed.
- The GAISCE element allowed learners to receive an additional certification which could be added to their list of achievements.
- The regular monitoring of attendance and the process of communicating with parents when learners were absent developed a good attendance process.
- The holistic development of the learner through parental feedback was noted. Whereby parents and facilitator explained that learner confidence improved over the course of the year.
- The provision of light refreshments was a definite bonus to these learners.

Covid Challenges

- Covid 19 posed a big problem for learner engagement. Prior to Christmas 2020 learner's attendance was very positive. Four learners continued with on-line remote learning,
- Post-Christmas 2020 (Covid 19 lockdown) the two learners from the travelling community became disengaged with the process. Even with regular check ins from the HSCL and Adult Educator it was not possible to reignite the passion that had initially been established and they did not complete the programme.

School Challenges

- Timetabling was an issue with the school. As all the learners participating in the programme were part of senior cycle (5th year) they were missing classes on Thursday to attend Bunclody Youth Connections.

School Suggestions going forward

- The cohort of learners to be selected for next pilot programme to come from Transition Year as opposed to Leaving Certificate.
- The Bunclody Youth Connections programme to form part of the learner's school timetable. This would reduce disruption to classes.
- The original Adult Educator is moving on from the tutoring role, however, it has been agreed she will continue her role as Gaisce PAL
- More programmes such as Bunclody Youth Connections to be offered to vulnerable learners. Due to covid some learners have experienced anxiety, stress, disengagement. Although schools are working tirelessly to develop strategies to support learners' additional programmes/supports are most definitely a requirement.

LEARNER TESTIMONIALS

Feedback from Bunclody Youth Connection Learners



Overall Experience in single words:

- Interesting
- Thought-provoking
- Enjoyable
- Practical
- Useful
- Motivating

What the learners enjoyed the most:

"My English has improved a lot since I started this course"

"I have learned how to work as part of a team"

"My confidence has improved a lot by talking to others in my class"

"I can now work independently and as part of a group"

"I have learned to speak with others better and work as a team"

"My time management skills have really improved"

"My communication with others has improved and my confidence has improved so much because of this"

"I really like the small class sizes"

"I learned more about myself"

"Helped me to work with others and get out more"

"My favourite part of the programme was the practical"

"Really enjoying using Duolingo"

"Have returned to school since starting on the BYC programme"

"My least favourite part was the theory"

Plan for Year 2 - 2021/2022

- Transport will be provided for progression learners to attend Youthreach Programme
- Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) Programme will sponsor Bunclody Youth Connections for 2021/2022
- BTEI will link closely with Bunclody Vocational College Home School Liaison Personnel
- BTEI will develop programme delivery linked to accredited QQI modules
- BTEI will manage and monitor programme and link in once a term with Youth Services Adult Education Officer
- Community Education Adult Educator will deliver GAISC Bronze Award Programme
- A full evaluation and review will take place upon completion of second year of this pilot programme

Year 2 - 2021/2022 Programme Aims

- The aim of the programme very much depended upon the individual young people who attended.
- It was expected the programme would support these young people back into full time attendance at their current school, or it may be a stepping-stone for them into a FET provision programme such as Youthreach.
- In line with the expected FET Strategic Priorities, this programme will foster inclusion by prioritising target cohort of potential early school leavers and create pathways by either returning to school or from school to FET programmes.

Appendix 1

Map of Work Adult Educator, Bunclody, WWETB

- Creating Referral Forms and Learner Evaluation forms
- Sending information sheets to the three schools
- Sending referral forms to HSCL in Bunclody Vocational College
- Attending training to become a PAL Leader to deliver GAISCE award.
- Arranging informal interviews with learners being referred from Bunclody VC
- Liaising with Bunclody Vocational College HSCL
- Sending out PLSS Forms for learners to parents through HSCL
- Liaising with BTEI Resource worker/QQI support around the level 3 QQI modules being delivered
- Creating timetable for programme mirroring Bunclody VC timetable
- Collating resources for the QQI Modules being delivered.
- Writing of assessment briefs for QQI Modules being delivered
- Presenting the content of the GAISCE Award to learners on commencing the programme
- Regular contact/following up with parents of learners.
- Regular/weekly contact with HSCL Bunclody VC
- Attending GAISCE webinars for updates during Covid-19
- Translating handouts/notes/worksheets for learners who English was not their first language.
- Assessing and correcting learners work.
- Attending meetings with the programme committee
- Putting together learners final work at the end of programme for IV and EA

Appendix 2

Role of HSCL with Bunclody Youth Connections

- The Role of the HSCL in Bunclody Vocational College with the Bunclody Youth Connections Programme.
- To form part of the steering group in instigating Bunclody Youth Connections.
- To inform the Care Team and staff at the Bunclody Vocational College of Bunclody Youth Connections.
- To lead the process of selecting the learners who would become part of the BYC programme.
- To carry out home visits informing parents of BYC and why their child had been selected for the programme.
- Once learners were selected and happy to participate in the programme to carry out home visits getting parents to sign application forms for the BYC programme.
- To meet with parents regularly updating them of the progress their child was making at Bunclody Youth Connections.
- To link in with learners regularly with how they are progressing with the Bunclody Youth Connections programme.
- To update Care Team regularly on Bunclody Youth Connections and inform Care Team of meetings held with the steering group and meetings held with the programme facilitator.
- To promote the Bunclody Youth Connections programme through the school website/Facebook page/school app.
- To liaise with the Adult Educator and offer regular support if learner attendance, work completion or engagement was an issue. This would be followed by phone calls and home visits with parents.

Appendix 3

Role of Bunclody Vocational College with Bunclody Youth Connections

- To select the learners who would become part of the BYC programme
- To monitor the development of learners engaging with BYC programme
- Members of Care Team to link in with selected parents and offer support regarding BYC
- To maintain regular updates on the progression of BYC and offer support if possible
- To examine additional routes to be offered to learners if return to school is not an option post BYC.



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