

Celebrating the achievements of our young people!

Fifteen teenagers from the Newry and Mourne area who took part in and completed the Kilkeel Gets Active Youth programme over the summer months were presented with an Open College Network (OCN) accredited award in Healthy Living for the Individual this month in Newry.



Young people from the Newry and Mourne area receiving their OCN accredited awards with local principle Mr Dillon, St.Colmons College, Alan Lecky and Johnny Wallace from Pathway Adventures NI, Councillor Roisin Mulgrew from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Richard O'Flaherty from Department for Communities

Richard O'Flaherty, Programme Director of the Anti-Poverty Pathfinder Programme of Department for Communities commended the programme at the awards evening stating that 'structured summer activities for young people are important gaps that we collectively need to be addressed in Northern Ireland. The OCN accreditation of this pilot programme shows the possibilities of learning outside of a school setting and over the summer months in a fun and interactive way. The Kilkeel Gets Active Programme emphasised the confidence, independence and team building skills that were built in the young people who participated on the programme over the two weeks. The Department for Communities is committed to identifying what works and build them up in scale through partnership working, co-design and co-production with organisations, children and their families'.

The "Kilkeel Gets Active" youth summer programme encouraged young people to stay active during the summer months and helped them understand the importance of healthy living by providing them with the skills and confidence to cook simple nutritious meals on a budget.

In addition to creating a safe place for young people to continue learning and participate in physical activities during school holidays, the pilot programme also fostered their relationship building skills and helped develop resilience to improve emotional wellbeing.

A few of the young people shared their experiences of participating on the programme; 'it was a great opportunity to socialise and achieve a qualification in a fun way' and another young person spoke at the awards evening saying 'we learnt so much over the two weeks, had lots of fun and made friends for life!'

The awards event was attended by statutory agencies including the Education Authority, Southern Health and Social Care Trust and the Health and Social Care Board who came together to celebrate the participation of young people on this programme. The Department for Communities who also attended the event showed their recognition to the partnership approach adopted to deliver this programme over the summer months through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership's (CYPSP) Newry Locality Planning Group, Children in Northern Ireland, Pathway Adventures Activities, SPACE and the Southern Regional College.



Councillor Roisin Mulgrew from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Pauline Leeson, Chief Executive from Children in Northern Ireland, Neal White, Youth Engagement and Events Manager from Pathway Adventures NI and Brian Sykes, Deputy Chief Executive from Reserve Forces and Cadets Association Northern Ireland

Allison Slater from Supporting People and Communities Everyday (SPACE), a charity offering family support in the Newry and Mourne Area offers their experience, "SPACE were delighted to be involved in the Kilkeel Gets Active programme. Our work in the community highlights the need for a new type of holiday provision for our young people. This programme has reduced some of the financial pressures that parents face over school holidays whilst providing continued education, physical

activity, opportunities to meet other young people and most importantly lots of fun. The number of OCN qualifications achieved at the end of the two weeks pays testament to the success of programmes of this nature.”



Young people from the Newry and Mourne area receiving their OCN accredited awards

The Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) is a multi-agency partnership, led by the Health and Social Care Board. It includes the leadership of key statutory agencies and community and voluntary organisations that have a responsibility for improving the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

For further information about the programme please contact Stephanie Thompson, CYPSP at Stephanie.thompson@hscni.net or telephone 028 95 363 188