



Press Release

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DISCOVER MORE – OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF ‘BREAKTHROUGH’ PROJECT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Breakthrough Programme is a new and exciting youth work programme for young people aged 14-24 years living in the Greater North Belfast, Shankill and Newtownabbey areas funded by the European Union’s PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB).

Led by Ashton Community Trust (ACT), the programme is delivered in partnership with Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum (CCRF) New Life City church, YEHA Project, Street Beat, Newtownabbey Arts and Cultural Network (NACN), New Lodge Arts and Loughview Community Action Partnership (LCAP).

Speaking at the launch event, Paul Roberts, Chief Executive of Ashton Community Trust emphasized the importance of collaborative working in changing attitudes of our people towards a peaceful society.

This holistic young person-centred approach, delivered by Youth Outreach Mentors, aims to achieve sustainable, positive change in the lives of young people by enhancing their capacity to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background and make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society. The co-designed programme will bring young people from across the areas to build their confidence, abilities and widen their outlook on life.

Mr Roberts said: **“Ashton Community Trust are delighted to be able to lead on the Breakthrough Programme. I would like to thank our community partners and local schools, Blessed Trinity, Boys Model & Mercy College for their continued support.”**

Katrina Newell (Head of Youth & Development) Ashton Community Trust said: **“The need for this programme is evidence-based in North-Belfast and learning for Breakthrough stemmed from the successful United Youth Pilot. In developing the Breakthrough Programme, I wanted to cover the core elements of Personal Development,**



Citizenship and Good Relations in a way that would enable young people to express themselves through a variety of creative methods, including Art, Film, Sport, Digital Fabrication & Music. I am very excited to embrace the youth work approach methodology in working with young people on ‘Breakthrough.’

Central to this programme is the relationship between the young person and the youth outreach mentor, a critical relationship that is open and honest, rooted in a youth work approach and committed to nurturing the young person.

Alongside programme delivery, one-to-one mentoring is a key aspect of the programme that encourages personal reflection, builds self-awareness, and supports young people to identify barriers and goals. Empathy, respect, compassion, outreach and patience characterises all interactions with young people to create the safe conditions to help young people flourish and move beyond their current horizons.

Nuala McCallum, Operations Manager for Breakthrough explained: **“Creating an environment where young people have access to all the support services they need is very important. The young people on Breakthrough have benefited from childcare facilities, travel and incentive payments. Accessing additional support can make a difference in a young person’s ability to fully engage on the programme. Therefore is a key element of the participation process.”**

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **“The project will provide personal development support for many children and young people with complex needs who may be feeling that they have been excluded from society. By participating in various voluntary activities and other civic-based initiatives it will encourage them to interact with and learn from people of a different community and religious background as well as improve their citizenship skills.”**

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Department of Youth Affairs in Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive.

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For more information please contact John McCandless, Communications Manager with the SEUPB on Mob. 07834 778018 or via e-mail john.mccandless@seupb.eu



Notes to Editor:

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.
- It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu