

Minutes of the YLEUK Meeting

13:30 | 29-September-2016

Ripley's Museum, London

Introduction

Ripley's museum manager Luke Reilly gave an introduction to the venue and offers that may be of interest.

- **Welcome**

- The YLEUK committee welcomed the members and asked if there were any comments regarding the minutes of the last meeting. However, very few could recall the minutes and it was suggested that we circulate the document as a reminder just before the meeting.

- **The Treasurer's update**

- The update was postponed until the AGM due to the absence of the Treasurer.

- **Trinity**

- Andy Harrison from Trinity gave a short talk about the new initiative of agent engagement work at Trinity. They have created an agent pack and distributed it to agents at Alphe and Studyworld which were well received. The aim is to encourage more agents to send business to member centres. They do not mention the cost of the GESE exams so this will not impact individual school pricing structures.
- A member raised a question about the new price increase of 10% and wanted an explanation. This was deemed very high particularly as the service has not changed in any way. Andy is to make an enquiry with their finance department.
- It was also noted that the cost of holding the GESE exams is increasing as student levels across the board are increasing.
- There is a suggestion of having different rates for different levels- although Andy did confirm that there are no plans to go down this route.
- Members also gave positive comments on the overall operation, which have been smooth this year.

- **BC inspections**

- A number of members said they had BC inspections during the summer. Anna Thatcher said their inspectors were pleased with the safeguarding / prevent documentations, and liked the idea of their open days for host families and publications of guidelines of dos & don'ts.
- Other members commented that inspectors didn't seem to pay much attention to the Prevent issues and have focused on more on traditional areas that they could comment on.
- Members also commented on some inspectors, have little experience in junior summer programme operation. They didn't seem to recognise that summer operations can be different from the all year round operations and insisted on using the same measures as for year- round adult centres.
- Anna Thatcher mentioned that there did appear also to be a lack of consistency over time. An area that she was awarded a 'strength' during her previous inspection was given a 'met' this time when nothing has changed.

- It was also noted that there seemed to be a lack of consistency from Inspector to Inspector with individuals focusing on different things.
- Members applauded on Mark Cook's comment that the Accreditation handbook is no longer fit for the purpose of the needs of young learner's activity programmes. The inspection outcome is very often inconsistent and self-contradicting. More lobbying is needed from the YLEUK committee with BC.
- A suggestion of inviting a representative from the BC to the AGM was made so that we could have a platform for the questions we have.
- The idea of creating a working paper which would annotate the BC handbook to highlight the areas which do not logically work for junior summer providers was suggested.
- Sarah Etchells proposed that members give feedback on areas that are not suitable in the current Accreditation Handbook. The committee will send out a questionnaire to collect comments & suggestions on changes.
- The majority of attendees said they would keep their Prevent Policy and associated documentation even if a separate Prevent Inspection was not carried out.
- **Safeguarding**
 - An interesting case was raised about the safeguarding issues around a transgender student that attended the summer course. In this particular case, the student appeared as a female in the passport but wanted to be identified as male. The school provided a single room and extra care for the student. However, more guidance would be welcomed.
 - Expanded on that, members also suggested more training is needed for handling students with difficulties such as ADHD.
 - The issue of agents/ parents not disclosing medical/ learning information about students prior to attending a course was also raised although no conclusions as to how we can change this culture were made.
 - Anna Thatcher announced that Barbara Lewin at British Study Centres has started a Safeguarding Forum for all schools in Brighton. The first meeting will be held on 19 October. The group uses the forum to ask questions to the local LADO. Members can contact all local centres to find out about certain families who they think could be host families too. It might be an initiative that could be extended into different regions.
- **Recruitment**
 - Members commented on the quality variation of activity leaders. "Personality plays a big part in how good they are".
 - A couple of schools had recruited teachers and other staff that appeared to be great in interviews, but were not good in practice.
 - Mel recommends that schools should have a minimum of two references as best practice. To speed up the process of gaining references from other member centres, Mel suggested that we create a list of recruitment contacts among YLEUK members. The idea was well received.
- **Operation issues**
 - The following issues have been mentioned which caused some problems: Southern rail strike, bad traffic in Oxford, the delay of Brighton 360 opening, a new requirement from Butlins (Bognor), demanding 1:8 adult to children ratio.

- Passport control was slow during the peak period, especially at LHR T4
- BA stopped the 'Unaccompanied minors' service earlier this year. This doesn't seem to have had huge effect on members' operation.

- **Website**

The committee thanked Jim Chirm for launching the new website.

Members were broken into small groups and each took up an area for the purpose of content suggestions:

- **Parents section:** Inform on how to deal with home sickness / explaining the legal perspective of having non-native teachers- it's not about cost saving / food / weather, UK laws on dos and don'ts (such as pepper spray) / what to expect / good places in the UK / terrorists / phoning / host families and host decriminalisation / managing expectations.
- **Agent section:** attract agents to work with YLEUK members.
- **Group leaders:** educating the level of behaviour- what is acceptable & what is not
- What to do if a group leader doesn't follow the guidelines
- **News section:** meeting minutes & agenda, a calendar of training, venue hire, regional information, recruitment, Facebook page.
- **Members section:** Moodle, excursion materials, tools, events & training, contact details of members and minutes of the agenda

- **Marketing**

- Sarah Wang reported that general market conditions seem to be challenging for the industry. Many members reported a decrease in student numbers.
- The English UK team is working hard to promote overseas. China is the only market that has on average 15% growth year on year. EUK will continue the very successful China Roadshow event in November, whilst delivering a 'Shakespeare Live' campaign in Latin American.

Meeting closed at approximately 4 pm.