



Comhairle na nÓg
Young Voices. Local Issues.

Amelie
Offaly Comhairle na nÓg

Agenda

Introduction to Youth Participation

- Comhairle na nÓg

Case Studies

- Cork City Comhairle na nÓg
- Monaghan Comhairle na nÓg
- Roscommon Comhairle na nÓg
- Mayo Comhairle na nÓg

Questions & Answers

Hints and Tips for engaging with Young People

Why consult with young people?



- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
 - Article 12 - *“Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity”*

The National Children’s Strategy (2000) - Comhairle na nÓg were established to fulfil Goal 1

- The Participation Framework was launched in 2021 by Hub na nÓg
- Based on the child-rights model of participation developed by Professor Laura Lundy, Queen's University.
- Provides guidance for decision-makers on the steps to take in giving children and young people a meaningful voice in decision-making
 - <https://hubnananog.ie/participation-framework/>

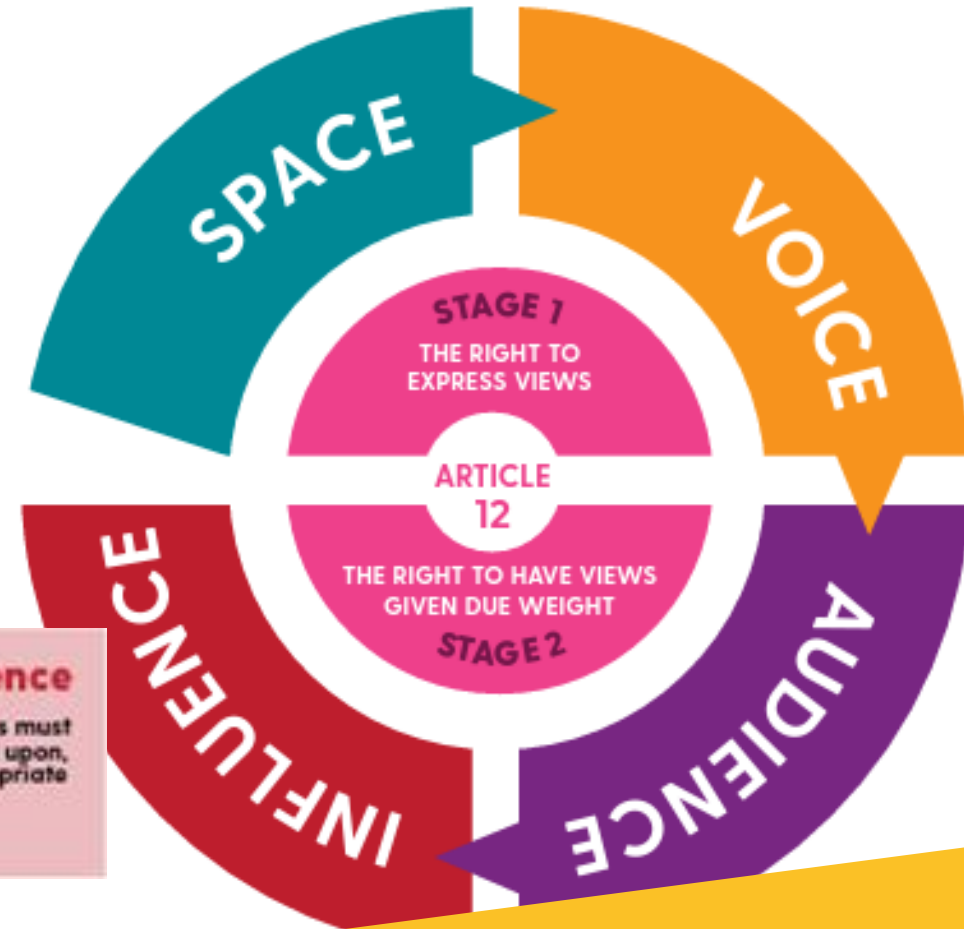


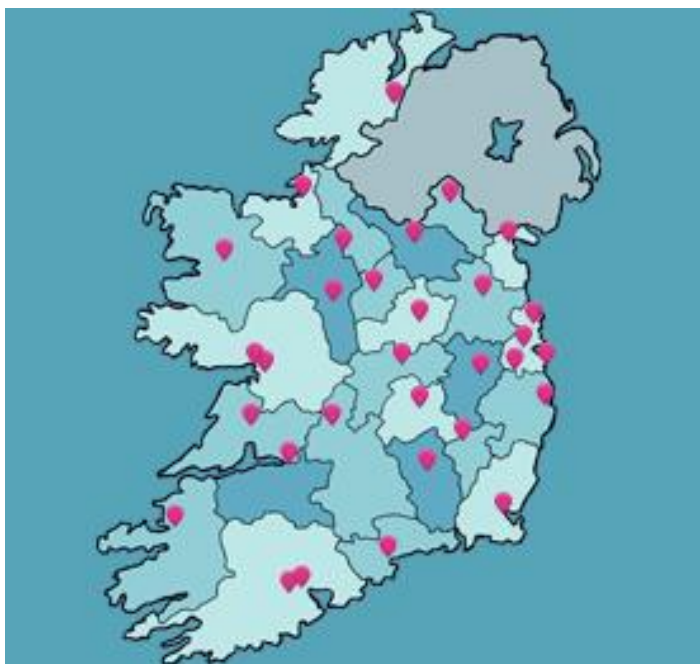
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Participation Framework
National Framework for Children
and Young People's Participation
in Decision-making



The Lundy Model of Participation





- 31 local authorities
- 31 Comhairlí (youth councils)
- Comhairle Coordinator
- Participation Officer (NPO)
- Steering Committee

Comhairle
na nÓg
(youth councils)

Comhairle
na nÓg
(youth councils)

- Young people are elected to represent their peers at local level
- 1000+ young people around the country



TWO MAIN OBJECTIVES

- For young people to identify, prioritise and progress topics/work plans that are important to them by enabling them to try and influence decision-makers to take action, and;
- To act as a consultative forum for adult decision-makers who want to include the views of young people in their work, whether it is policy development or giving feedback on services and facilities

Comhairle
na nÓg
(youth councils)

- Recognised national structure for consulting children and young people


Comhairle na nÓg
Young Voices. Local Issues.



Local consultations: What are the first steps:

- Contact the Comhairle coordinator for the area
- Using the Participation Framework agree a method of consultation that meets the Space, Voice, Audience and Influence needs
- Logistics
- Consult
- Initial Feedback, Feedback on Influence (maybe later)

**Comhairle
na nÓg**
(youth councils)

Local consultations :

- Follow up activities could be:
 - Ongoing joint working relationships.
 - Comhairle membership on committees etc.
 - Presentations (from LAGs to Comhairle and Comhairle to LAGs)
 - Sharing relevant updates, newsletters etc



Other elements of Comhairle na nÓg:

- **Dáil na nÓg**
 - biennial youth parliament
- **CnÓg National Executive**
 - 31 reps from each Comhairle work on mandate from Dáil na nÓg
- **CnÓg Showcase**
 - Biennial national networking event



Other Participation Structures under the NPO

- **The National Youth Assembly of Ireland**
 - Feeds youth input into specific policy
 - Broadens age range from 12 to 25 years
 - Delegates from Comhairle na nÓg
 - Delegates from relevant organisations

Comhairle
na nÓg
(youth councils)

Feedback 4 Fs:

- Fast
- Friendly
- Full
- Follow up

Comhairle
na nÓg
(youth councils)

Thank you.



Case Study 1 - Cork City Comhairle na nÓg

Our project so far....

Cork City
Comhairle

Youth Mental Health

Our 2022 AGM

On November 9th cork city Comhairle held our 2022 AGM. This is where I was first introduced to Comhairle as one of the over 70 young people who attend the conference. Members worked with us and introduced us to Comhairle as we worked with each other.



With our groups we talked about issues that we face in our schools and eventually we focused on the disturbing lack of adequate mental health services in our schools.

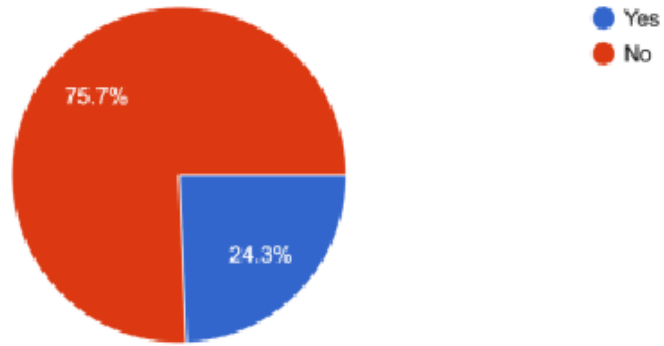
Members handed out surveys for us and had us vote on what issues we felt are most important to us.





Do you feel you can go to your guidance counsellor if you need support?

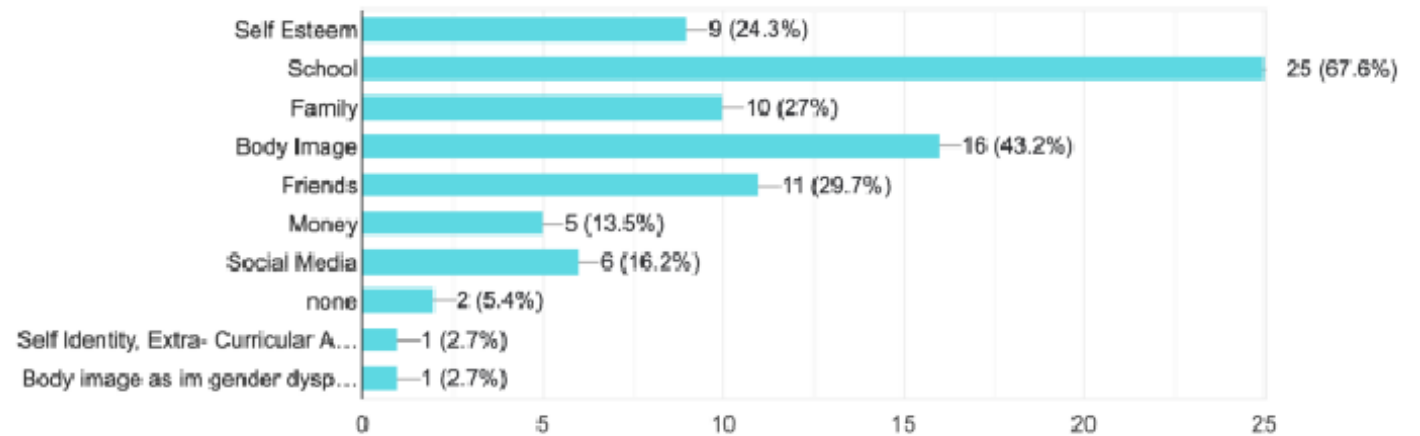
37 responses



Results

Thinking about your life currently what is the main cause of stress/anxiety for you?

37 responses



Finding the solution

Now we knew that there is undeniable problem with the quality of mental health services in our schools but we still needed to find a solution.

Through our meetings we had devised a **three pronged** approach to raising awareness and directing young people to help.

Prong 1

We have collaborated with mental health groups like Jigsaw, invited independent counselors and therapists to conduct workshops, and partnered with UCC to provide workshops on managing exam stress.

We intend to incorporate the skills we have learned from these workshops into our informational materials

Prong 2

We plan to create posters for Cork City schools, designing a four page brochure that lists helpline numbers and resources and developing a website to host all these materials. We want to make sure that the design is appealing to young people so we will work with a local artist .

We plan to distribute these to schools across the city.

Prong 3

We will also advocate for training programs for counselors and school faculty and improved access to counseling services in schools.

Our lobbying will primarily target the education and health departments since we decided that they would be the most effective root to our goal.



Thank you

- **Space**
 - A comfortable space with facilitators is important when meeting or consulting with young people to ensure they feel safe and comfortable to share their views and ideas.
- **Voice**
 - A LAG could meet with a Comhairle for a consultation on a specific issue or topic or allow the Comhairle to identify what was an area of concern for young people in their communities.
- **Audience**
 - A LAG could work with a Comhairle to ensure the ideas and plans developed in partnership would be shared with an appropriate audience including stakeholders and decision makers.
- **Influence**
 - The outcomes from a LEADER Programme including young people may influence the services provided to a wide range of young people in the communities.

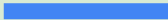
Case Study 2 - Monaghan Comhairle na nÓg

Monaghan Comhairle na nÓg

Fast Fashion



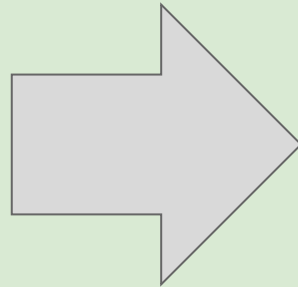
Our Initiative



To raise awareness of the environmental impacts of fast fashion

What happened?

- Initially we ran a Clothes Swap event at the market in Carrickmacross.
- Low footfall and poor weather meant this was not as successful as we hoped.



- We met with Monaghan County Council and linked with the sustainability Officer.
- Through this link we were able to use the County Councils marquee at the Monaghan Street Food Festival.



Outcome

We increased awareness of the effects of fast fashion of the local environment and opened peoples eyes to fun and sustainable ways of updating your wardrobe



Case Study 3 - Roscommon Comhairle na nÓg

Roscommon
Comhairle na nÓg
Young Voices. Local Issues.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

**ROS
COM
MON**

Comhairle Contae
Ros Comáin
Roscommon
County Council



Youth Work Ireland
Midlands

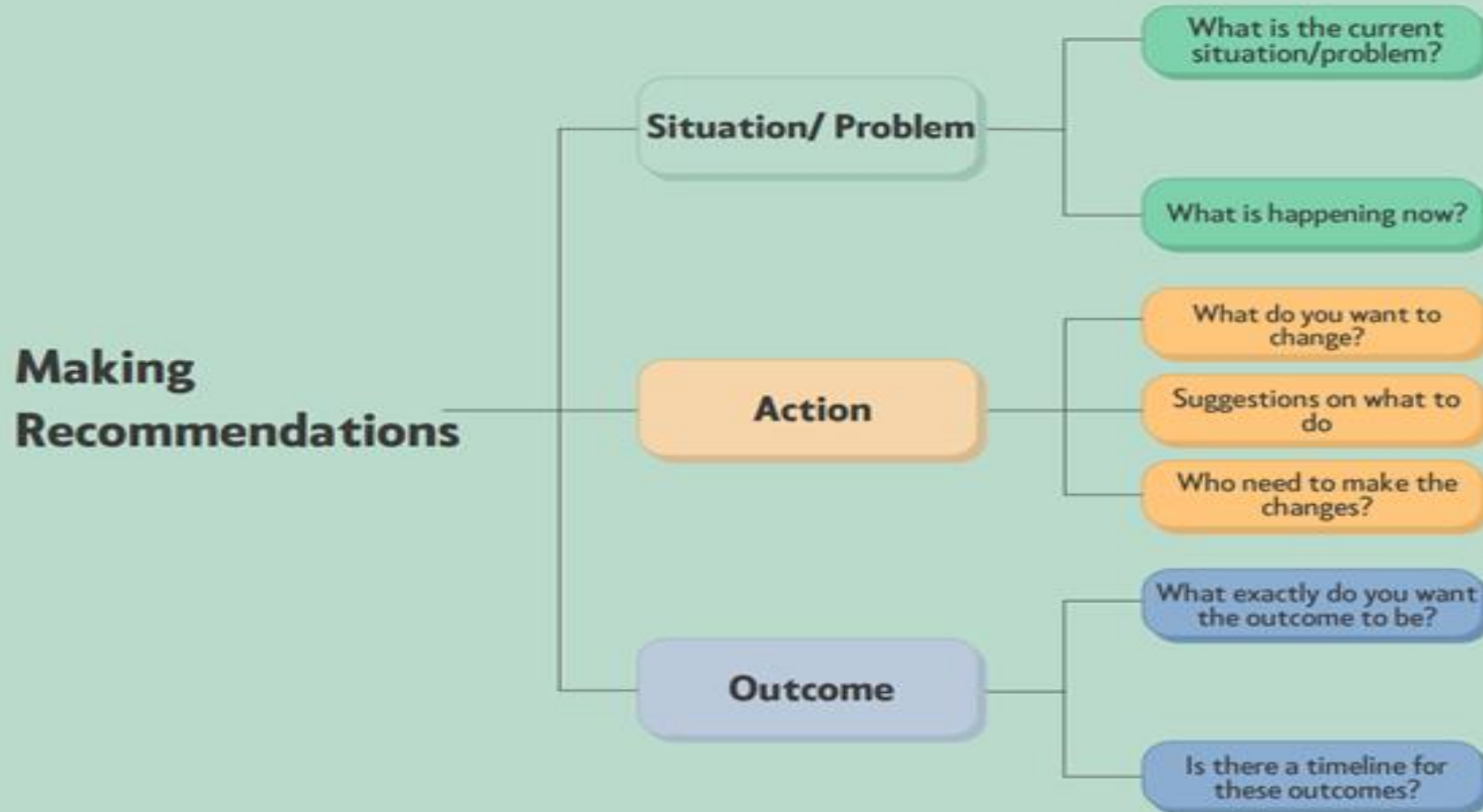
**Children and
young people
have a right to
participate in
decisions that
affect their lives**

UN Convention on Rights of the
Child (UNCRC)

**“Young people have the right to say what
they think about anything that affects
them. What they say must be listened to
carefully. When decisions are made
which affect young people, by official
bodies, they must listen to what the
young people want and feel”**

Comhairle na nÓg

'Making Recommendations' Model



Roscommon Comhairle na nÓg's Annual Youth Conference

Over ninety young people, representing all youth organisations and nine secondary schools in Co. Roscommon are invited to attend our Annual Youth Conference.

During Covid, topics for discussion were pre-selected through our 'Issues Affecting Young People' survey, which was distributed to all post primary schools and youth organisations in County Roscommon a month in advance.

The survey findings inform RCNN's 'World Café' workshop discussions. The topics identified in 2021 were Facilities / Amenities for Young People, Drugs & Alcohol, COVID-19 and Mental Health.

Our AGM Padlet Asked:

**What change could
Comhairle make to
help young people's
mental health?**

Next is what those young people told
us

- More awareness of areas in roscommon in **school** and in other areas
- more **anonymous help services**
- more **open conversations in school** and at home about our issues
- **More helplines** like child line!
- raise awareness

- **more therapeutical stations**
- dont ignore it anymore. **its a problem that needs to be recognized especially in school environments**
- **more support in schools**
- No **waiting months to see a counsellor** as some people have to wait ages to have a consultation

- Don't ignore it, mental health is a big issue for young people so no more pushing it aside, easier access for us and a much better support system
- better support system in school surround mental health
- school being more aware and willing to help
- ensure schools understand the pressure they are putting in the students
- open more groups and get teachers aware of student mental health
- thinks being anonymous because some people are afraid to let people know because they are scared that

- school support
- less homework and pressure
- talking to people who understand the problem
- provide a service in school for mental health
- Support
- Confusion. People confusing being worried with anxiety

- Support in school
- I feel like lack of sleep is cause
- easier access to help
- less school pressure
- more focus on mental health in sphe
- additional supports for young children
- schools offering my systems

AGM Feedback

53% of the young people who attended our AGM voted Mental Health to be the main issue affecting young people in Co. Roscommon.

Their views on mental health and the change they would like to see were recorded using Padlet.com

<https://padlet.com/kcostello31/cz5nkozy3l4ysgs/wish/1858855115>

Roscommon Comhairle na nÓg Recommendation

Young people in Co. Roscommon have stated that they need more mental health support in schools.

We recommend that schools schedule at least one meeting with a trained listening service facilitator for every student during the school year.

We recommend that this change should be implemented before the end of 2023.

Central Statistics Office

49% of teenagers are unaware of mental health services in their local area.

30% stated they did not seek help due to fear of embarrassment.

20% expressed the fact a service was unavailable close to home.

Teenagers in rural areas are the most affected



PLANET YOUTH COUNTY REPORT ROSCOMMON 2020

- “Many of the identified issues were apparent in the findings of the previous Planet Youth survey, however the pandemic has amplified them and brought them to the fore. Never before has the need to invest in the wellbeing of our young people been more apparent or more important”

Issues To Be Addressed

- Sexuality
- Sexual Health
- Bereavement
- Anxiety
- Pregnancy
- Motivation
- Bullying
- Family
- Separation / Divorce
- Independent Living
- Exam Stress
- Substance Use
- Suicidal Ideation
- Family Addiction
- Toxic Relationships
- Negative Households
- Gender Divide

Example for One Session per Student: Elphin CC Here4U Implementation Total Cost €7,305.97 for One Year

$164 \text{ Students} \div 28 \text{ weeks} = 5.86 \div 6$
students per day = 1 or 1 day per week

7hrs per day + 1hr 45min travel
x 1 day in school x 28 weeks.
= €4863.25 per year

116km r/t @ .39c
per km x 28 weeks
= €1266.72

Paycost
€19.85 per hour
including 11% PRSI

Travel from Athlone at
Youth Service Rate
€ .39c per km

A device €500
Supervision €396
Stationary €280 (€10 per
week)

Example for One Session per Student: St. Nathy's Here4U Implementation Total Cost €28,935.96 for One Year

$647 \text{ Students} \div 28 \text{ weeks} = 23.11 \div 6$
students per day = 3.85 or 4 days per week

7hrs per day + 2hr 30min travel
x 4 days in school x 28 weeks
= €21,120.96 per year

116km r/t @ .39c
per km x 28 weeks
= €6,639.36

Paycost
€19.85 per hour
including 11% PRSI

Travel from Athlone at
Youth Service Rate
€ .39c per km

A device €500
Supervision €396
Stationary €280 (€10 per
week)

Estimated Total
€162,234.23

Cost to
facilitate one
Here4U
session for
every student
in County
Roscommon

Elphin CC €7,305.97

Castlerea CS €13,566.98

CBS Roscommon €14,388.64

Convent of Mercy €16,611.84

Colaiste Chiarain €16,738.40

Roscommon CC €19,533.92

Abbey CC, Boyle €20,965.56

Strokestown €24,186.96

St. Nathy's College €28,935.96

Services to Offer Young People

- **Listening** - Facilitators provide a listening ear that is non-judgmental, confidential and non-directive.
- **Referral** - Facilitators are in a position to provide help to the young person by identifying and presenting options for supports or services that may be of assistance.
- **Guiding Support** – Discussion with young people is goal orientated and progressive. In this way the service provides more than simply sign-posting, it assists young people to take steps to avail of the services they require, or to become active agents in their own self-care.



Roscommon's Youth Council

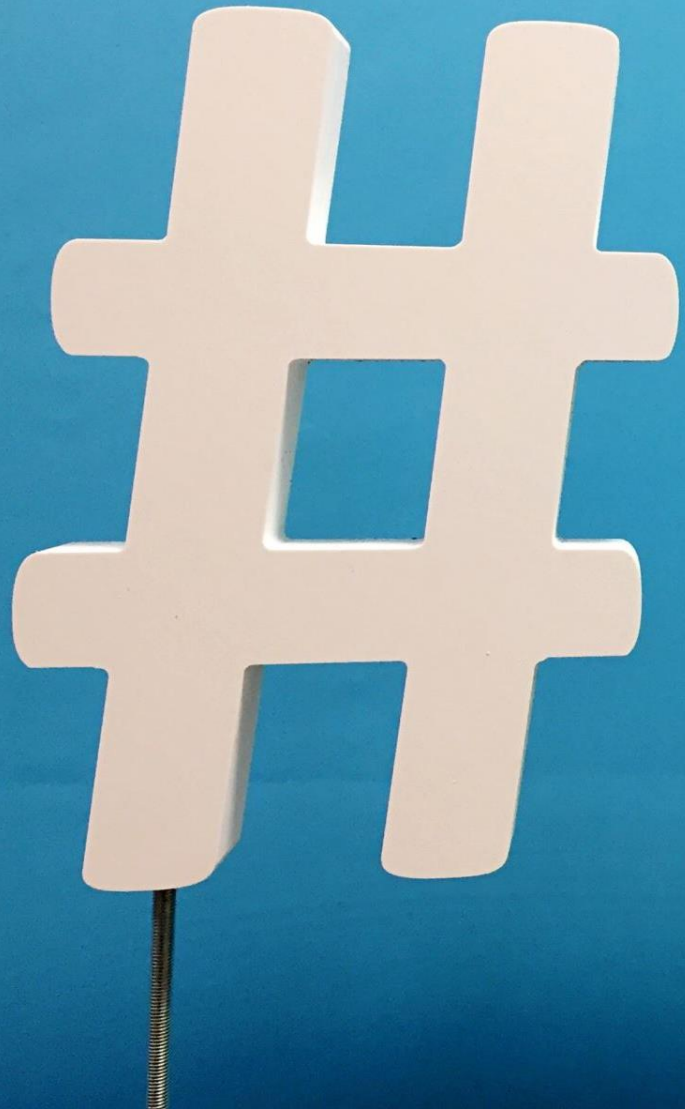


Comhairle Contae
Ros Comáin
Roscommon
County Council



Youth Work Ireland
Midlands

Roscommon 
Comhairle na nÓg
Young Voices. Local Issues.



Social Media

- Facebook – Roscommon Comhairle na nÓg
- Instagram – roscomhairle
- Twitter - @roscomhairle
- TikTok – roscomhairle
- Snapchat – roscomhairle
- YouTube – Roscommon Comhairle na nÓg

Case Study 4 - Mayo Comhairle na nÓg

Mayo Comhairle na nÓg

Purpose :

- **To be part of a Project Advisory Group which would support the reform of the Youth Services Grant Scheme**

How I heard about this:

- **Through my Comhairle na nÓg Coordinator**

Mayo Comhairle na nÓg

Why I wanted to be part of this:

- **This scheme affects young people**
- **To ensure a youth voice present**

What was needed

- **Scheme to be reviewed**
- **Microsite review**

Mayo Comhairle na nÓg

What we have done so far:

- Young people on PAG reviewed microsite- identified issues, shared with our organisations for review.
- Created google doc to compile responses

Who was there to hear our feedback:

- The full PAG committee listened to the feedback including project owner, youth sector reps, young people, subject matter expert and representatives from Tusla, Pobal and ETBI

Where did the feedback go?

- Anonymously into minutes of the meeting to change in advance of next meeting.

Mayo Comhairle na nÓg

How our views influenced decision making:

- **Microsite sent to everyone again with the changes**
- **Young people on PAG reviewed together to ensure needs were satisfied and were happy to see that every request was met.**

Hints and Tips

“Make sure that young people are actively listened to and are not looked down upon for being younger than other people in the meeting”

Consider young people's time schedules when planning meetings you would like them to attend. It can be difficult to regularly get out of school.

When consulting on what issues are important to young people, let the youth talk it out. Adults can supervise and bring their own opinions but don't try to steer the young people's opinions.

Sit down and talk to us early, not once all the decisions have been already made.

“You have to give us freedom to talk it out without older people's opinions influencing us”

Don't only ask us about 'the future' Yes we are the future but we are also living in the present and would like to make a difference now.

Make sure that young people have enough information to make informed voices on for example – provide young people with plain English information on the purpose of the meetings and background information ahead of the meetings.

Any Questions??