

Comhairle na nÓg

Your Local Youth Council

An Overview



Comhairle na nÓg



Comhairle na nÓg (Local Youth Council) was established in 2002 as the permanent structure representing young voices in decision-making at local and national level in Ireland. This was in response to Ireland's commitment to implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Comhairle na nÓg operates in each of the 31 Local Authority areas across Ireland. Funded and managed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE), the councils enable young people aged 12-17 to exercise their right in influencing decision-makers on the topics most important to them.

Comhairle na nÓg is supported locally by the Local Authority and Comhairle na nÓg Coordinator who facilitate the involvement of their members to input into the development of local policies and services in their Local Authority areas. Comhairle na nÓg meet bi-weekly/monthly throughout the year.

The Comhairle na nÓg website provides further information about Comhairle na nÓg: www.comhairlenanog.ie

What we do:

Comhairle na nÓg facilitates young people to meaningfully engage in decision making in two ways:

1. Identify and work on issues/matters of importance to young people to achieve a targeted outcome or impact.
2. Act as a consultative forum with adult decision makers in the locality. This can include participation in consultations where Comhairle na nÓg members are asked for their opinion, input and feedback on new and existing services, policies and decisions that affect young people.



Getting Involved with Comhairle na nÓg

How young people get involved in Comhairle na nÓg

Young people aged 12-17 can become members of their local Comhairle na nÓg through their schools, youth organisations and community groups.

A wide group of young people are invited to attend the Comhairle na nÓg Annual Youth Conference, typically held in October/November during school times.

Each year Comhairle na nÓg host an Annual Youth Conference. Coordinators will issue invitations seeking nominations and support for young people to attend the conference. These invitations will be sent to schools and local organisations that work directly with/or represent young people, including seldom heard young people in the Local Authority area.

At the conference the issues/matters to be pursued by the Comhairle na nÓg members are identified, discussed and prioritised by all the young people.

Young people interested in becoming part of Comhairle na nÓg can nominate themselves for election to be part of Comhairle na nÓg at the Annual Youth Conference.



Government Consultations

DCDE supports Government Departments in seeking the views of children and young people to inform Government policy on issues of national importance. Some recent examples include:

- In 2024, Department of Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) consulted with young people on the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy on the development of the successor Strategy.
- In 2024, a Youth Advisory Group was formed to assist DCEDIY in the Education for Sustainable Development Forum and ensure the National Stakeholder Forum on ESD in November 2024 is representative for children and young adults across Ireland.
- In 2023, the National Social and Economic Council (NESC) consulted with young people from Comhairle na nÓg and the National Executive on how to involve young people in its work. In 2024 the young people provided a summary for the NESC@50 report which will be brought to Government.
- In 2023, DCEDIY consulted young people age 16-18 in relation to what things are important to their lives that the longitudinal Growing Up in Ireland study might be able to capture.



National Level Opportunities for Young People Involved in Comhairle na nÓg

Dáil na nÓg

A member of Comhairle na nÓg may be elected to attend the biennial Dáil na nÓg, the national youth parliament for young people aged 12–17 years. It provides a national forum for young people to discuss and vote on issues that affect their lives. Some 200 delegates, elected through the 31 Comhairle na nÓg, participate in the biennial Dáil na nÓg event, hosted by the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality. As part of the day-long event, delegates get the opportunity to meet with adult decision-makers and policy-makers and make recommendations on the issues most affecting young people.



Comhairle na nÓg National Executive

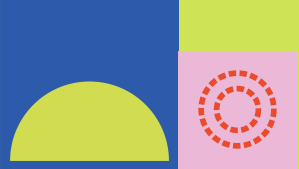
A member of Comhairle na nÓg may be elected to the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive, made up of one representative from each Comhairle na nÓg. The National Executive are tasked with following up on the recommendations from Dáil na nÓg and aim to influence decision making in the area. The National Executive has a term of office of two years and meets once a month outside of school times. (National Executive members may be invited to attend relevant initiatives, events, consultations during school hours over the course of their term).

National Youth Assembly of Ireland

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) established the National Youth Assembly of Ireland in 2022 to meet key commitments in the Programme for Government by collaborating closely with other Government Departments to convene Youth Assemblies on specific policy areas.

The National Youth Assembly meets to discuss and debate different policy topics of importance that will impact young people. Delegates range from 12 to 24 years of age and come from all over Ireland. Around 60 are selected by Comhairle na nÓg and other established youth organisations to sit on the National Youth Assembly. The profile of the delegates is diverse, with young people representing all geographical areas both urban and rural, ages, genders, and groups.

The Assembly makes recommendations to inform Government policy on areas such as climate, rural development and other issues of importance to young people. For instance, DCDE collaborates closely with the Department of Climate, Energy and Environment to convene the annual National Youth Assembly on Climate, and with the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht to convene the annual Rural Youth Assembly. A member of Comhairle na nÓg may become a member of the National Youth Assembly of Ireland.



The National Participation Office

The National Participation Office (NPO) was established in 2021 within DCEDIY to manage and coordinate the activities of Comhairle na nÓg (Local Youth Councils), Dáil na nÓg (youth parliament), the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive, The National Youth Assembly of Ireland, Seanad na nÓg and other related youth participation initiatives and structures.

The NPO operates under the guidance and oversight of DCDE and has responsibility for overseeing and implementing the Comhairle na nÓg Five Year Development Plan, which aims to strengthen and develop Comhairle to be the leading youth participation structure in Ireland. DCDE directs, oversees and supports the work of the NPO and collaborates with the NPO on cross-Government engagement with Comhairle na nÓg and other participation structures, stakeholder engagement and relationship building.

For more information contact the NPO at info@youthparticipation.ie.



Comhairle na nÓg

Your Local
Youth Council



An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

