

Comhairle Members' Networking Events 2017



Sligo gang at the Glasshouse Hotel showing solidarity for those in Syria #withsyria

Absolute Hotel, Limerick, 11th April 2017

Glasshouse Hotel, Sligo, 12th April 2017

Woodquay Venue, Dublin, 13th April 2017

Comhairle Members' Networking Events 2017:

The Participation Support Team for Comhairle na nÓg organised and ran three Comhairle Members' Networking Events around the country in April 2017. The first was held in Limerick, followed by one in Sligo and in Dublin. These were attended by a total of 101 delegates from 30 of the 31 Comhairlí na nÓg around the country.



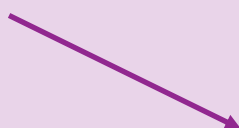
The Limerick gang



The purpose of the annual Networking Events is to give Comhairle members an opportunity to network with other Comhairlí in a very informal way. Comhairle members are invited to share their experiences and ideas of working on various topics with each other. It gives them the chance to learn from each other, and find out how other Comhairlí do things. They talk about what they do at Comhairle meetings, about their topics, what the highlights of their past year has been, and what improvements they would like to see.

Throughout the day there were ice-breaker games to help everyone get to know each other and to have some fun as well. Needless to say, the games got very competitive, as you can see from page 8

The Dublin gang



The morning's agenda kicked off with the Networking session. This gave delegates the opportunity to both reflect on how their own Comhairle is doing and to share their experiences, highlights and challenges with other Comhairlí (see pp. 3-5).

The afternoon session was taken up with a consultation with the young people on the topic of Brexit and its potential impact on the lives of young people in Ireland (see pp 10-11)

The Networking Session:

Comhairle delegates reflected on how their Comhairle na nÓg is doing in 2017 by looking at eight different areas on a template. Each Comhairle member was given an individual template to fill in on their own. They then worked with their own Comhairle group to complete a larger template and to combine their thoughts and ideas. Below is a summary of some of the key points that came up under each of the headings:

1) Highlights of Comhairle term to date:

The delegates mentioned a variety of things including Comhairle meetings, AGMs, Comhairle Showcase, State Ceremonial at Áras an Uachtaráin and meeting President Higgins, residentials, youth exchanges, CYPSC meetings, campaign launches including Teen Space and Breaking Stereotypes, and making presentations on their work to decision makers.

2) What we do at a Comhairle meeting

"Plan our actions for the year". "Work as a team". "Stick to our agenda". "Ice-breakers". "Drink tea". "Discuss our topic and how we will approach it". "Break into groups to work on our ongoing project". "Get updates from the National Executive member". "Plan trips and events". "Plan our AGM".



3) Strengths of our Comhairle

"Everyone gets a chance to speak". "Everyone has an equal voice". "Everyone gets along well". "Organising events". "Team-work". "We make it fun". "Diversity". "People are respected". "Great organisation & dedicated team". "Good communication". "Co-operation". "Being inclusive". "Being able to share opinions without fear". "Time management". "Commitment". "Linking in with local youth groups and schools". "Dedicated steering committee". "Humour". "Friendship". "Strong social media presence". "Incredible support from county council".

4) Topic(s) our Comhairle is currently working on'

For detailed information on the topics of all 31 Comhairlí, please see pages 6-7 of this report.

The Networking Session

5) Things we'd like to improve in our Comhairle

"Online communication". "Time-keeping". "Productivity". "More opportunities to work with regional Comhairlí". "Funding". "Have more meetings". "Enforce stricter attendance rules". "Having a bigger voice in our area". "Closer communication between members outside of meetings". "Focus and productivity". "Efficiency".

"How to work efficiently as a team"



"How to be more confident in public speaking".



"There is strength in numbers"

"Everyone is different but diversity is good"



"Young people are the voice of the future and need to be represented"

Other things they've learned in Comhairle included:

"How to establish a committee". "Confidence". "Independence". "People skills". "What young people feel are the most important issues". "How to take responsibility". "Presentation skills". "Leadership skills". "Event planning".

The Networking Session:

7) Things we'd like to learn in our Comhairle



"How to connect with other organisations to bring about effective change"

"How to improve the influence of young people"

"How to achieve success with long-term plans"

Other things members would like to learn in their Comhairle included the following:

"Public speaking". "How to actively participate in our communities after Comhairle".

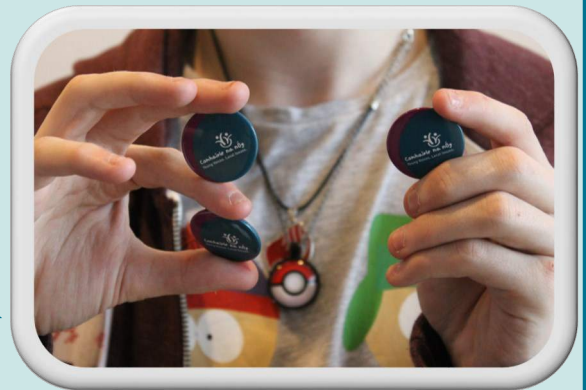
"How to run a committee". "How to run events".

8) What Comhairle means to us

"Having an active role in society and our future"

"An opportunity to make a difference for young people by young people"

"A voice for young people"



After completing the template, the delegates had an opportunity to share their answers and their ideas with other Comhairlí in the room using a rotating "carousel" system, chatting with one other Comhairle group at a time.

Comhairle Topics 2017

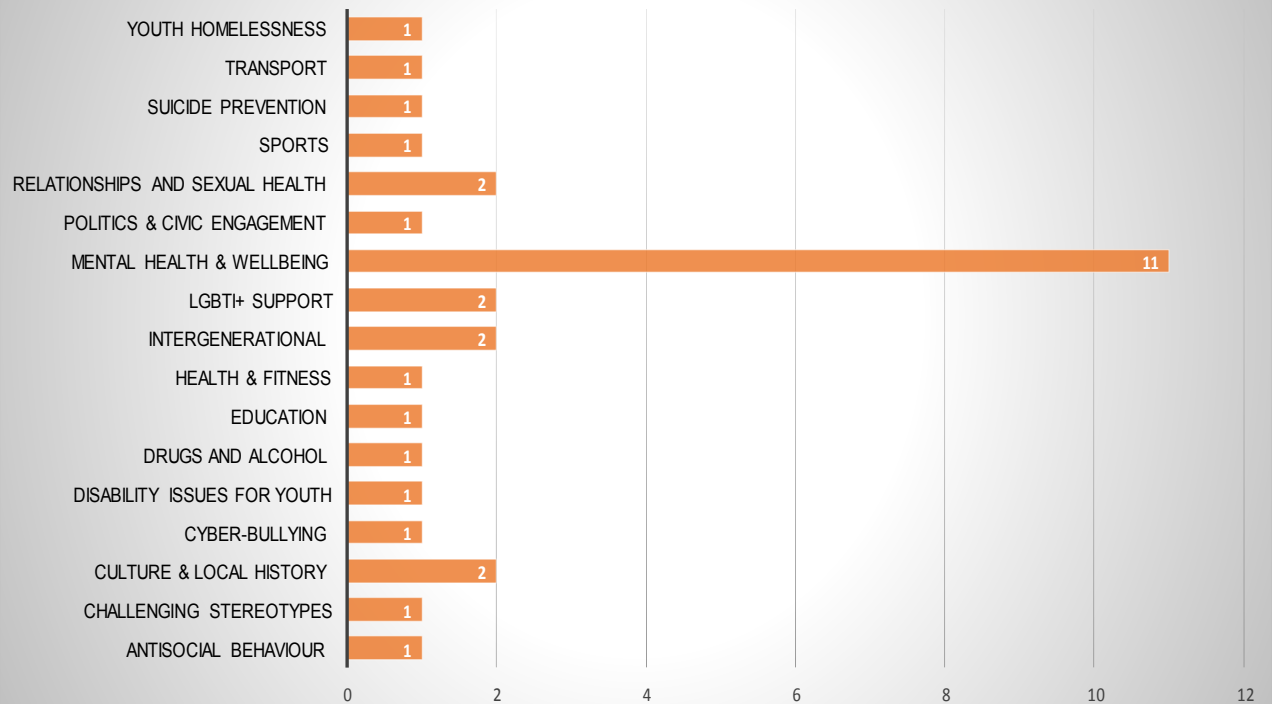


Chart shows number of Comhairlí na nÓg progressing each topic:

The chart above is a breakdown of the main topics being progressed by Comhairle na nÓg in 2017 and the number of Comhairlí working on each one. What is immediately obvious is the strong trend towards "mental health and wellbeing" being worked on by over a third of Comhairlí - 11 out of 31 Comhairlí will be working on this as their primary topic in 2017. The focus of the "mental health and wellbeing" projects are on promoting positive mental health through local peer-led campaigns, video pieces and events. Additional ideas to be explored are mindfulness and stress-reduction programmes in schools, and an awareness campaign on eating disorders.

However, we also can see of a greater diversity of topics and an emergence of new topic areas in 2017, for example, "culture and local history", "politics and civic engagement", "disability issues for youth", "suicide prevention" and "antisocial behaviour". "Disability issues for youth" will take the form of a campaign to support young people with disabilities living in the county. The topic of "antisocial behaviour" will focus on an anti-violence campaign for young people.

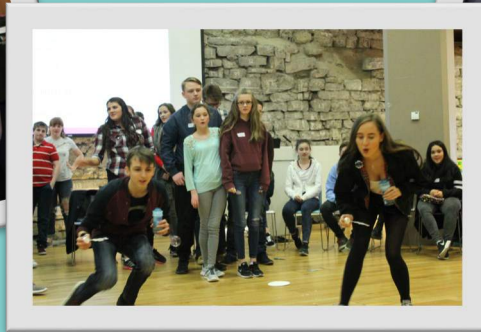
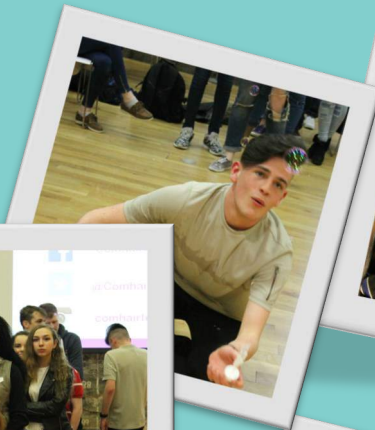
The Comhairlí working on the LGBTI+ topic have a particular focus on the support of LGBTI+ young people in their communities, and in raising awareness of LGBTI+ issues. One proposed method is the introduction of peer-led leadership training on LGBTI+ support and awareness programmes in schools. Finally, Youth Homelessness, Transport, Sports, Relationships & Sexual Health, Intergenerational projects, Education, Drugs & Alcohol, Health & Fitness, Cyber-bullying and Challenging Stereotypes are additional topics being progressed by Comhairle na nÓg in 2017.

COMHAIRLE TOPICS 2017:

Carlow	LGBTI+ support
Cavan	Culture & Local History
Clare	Mental Health.
Cork City	Suicide Prevention
Cork County	Social Inclusion - Sexual Education in school
Donegal	Sport recognition for girls
Dublin City	Homelessness with a focus on youth homelessness
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	Mental Health
Fingal County Council	Mental Health
Galway City	Mental Health
Galway County	Relationships and Sexual Health
Kerry	Mental Health
Kildare	Disability issues for youth
Kilkenny	Mental Health
Laois	Education
Leitrim	Antisocial behaviour
Limerick	Politics & Civic Engagement in young people
Longford	Culture and local history
Louth	Mental Health
Mayo	Mental Health
Meath	Health and Fitness
Monaghan	Mental Health
Offaly	TBC (Intergenerational project as secondary topic)
Roscommon	Transport
Sligo	Intergenerational
South Dublin	Mental Health
Tipperary	LGBTI+
Waterford	Challenging Stereotypes
Westmeath	Mental Health and Wellbeing
Wexford	Drugs and alcohol
Wicklow	Cyber bullying.

Ice-breaking fun:

Ice-breakers on the three days included General Post, Stop the Bus and the Bubble Game. Things occasionally got a little 'competitive'!



Spontaneous lunchtime entertainment in Sligo:



GROUP SHOTS 2017:



Brexit consultation:

#LetsTalkBrexit: Exploring the implications for children and young people of the UK's decision to leave the EU

The afternoon session was taken up with a consultation on the topic of Brexit and its impact on the lives of young people in Ireland. The consultation was conducted under a number of themes as follows:

- * Travel
- * Democracy and politics
- * Employment
- * Access to Third Level Education in the UK
- * Trade
- * Tax and Regulation
- * Northern Ireland - Political And Daily Life Impacts
- * Discrimination, Racism And Xenophobia
- * Health Care

These themes came from a consensus workshop on Brexit carried out with the Comhairle National Executive in January 2017.



Brexit consultataion

#LetsTalkBrexit: Exploring the implications for children and young people of the UK's decision to leave the EU

Comhairle members attending the Networking Events were given the opportunity to work on additional themes if they felt that something was missing from the list on previous page. In Limerick the group added two additional themes:

- * Refugees
- * The Irish language

Serious brainstorming going on below!!

No additional themes were added in Sligo and Dublin.



The findings are currently being compiled in a separate report to be submitted to the Department of the Taoiseach. This report will be sent to all participants and Comhairlí na nÓg upon completion.

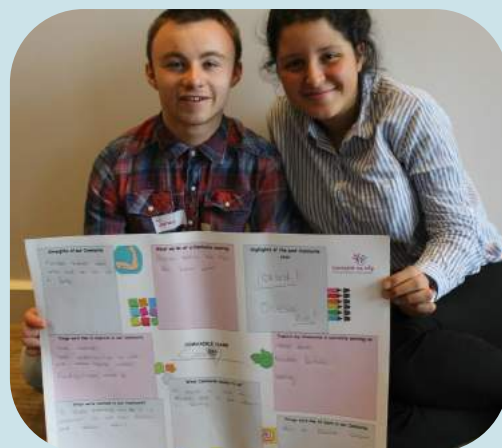
What the delegates said about the Networking Events:

Out of the 101 who took part, 97 filled in the evaluation form.

- ♦ 51% rated the day as 'excellent'
- ♦ 43% rated the day as 4 out of 5
- ♦ 5% rated the day as 3 out of 5
- ♦ 1% rated the day as 2 out of 5

'Do you feel that you got the chance to share what your Comhairle is working on with other Comhairle members from other Comhairle na nÓg?

99% said Yes, and just 1% said No.



'Do you feel that you learned something new today that will be useful for your Comhairle na nÓg?'

95.7% said Yes, and just 4.3% said No.



What the delegates said about the Networking Events:



"Getting to meet new people and sharing ideas"

"Ice-breakers"

"Making friends and sharing opinions"



What was the best thing about the Networking Day?



"Lunch and banter"

"Discussing our topics with other Comhairlí"



Some of the suggestions on what to change about the Networking Days included:

"More opportunities to chat and learn about each other". "Make it longer". "Appoint someone to direct the Brexit consultation". "More advice on our Comhairle projects". "Brexit: choose a topic more relevant to young people"

A few more pics from the three days:



A FINAL WORD:

Thank you to all the participants for making these three days so great and for giving the Participation Team such a good insight into what's going on with your Comhairle. We particularly want to thank you for your contributions in the Networking Session and the Brexit consultation. Your energy and enthusiasm was amazing!

A special thank you to all the coordinators for your kind cooperation and support with the networking days 2017. Click on weblink below for more info and more pics!

<http://www.comhairlenanog.ie/who-we-are/what-happens/young-comhairle-members-networking-events/>