

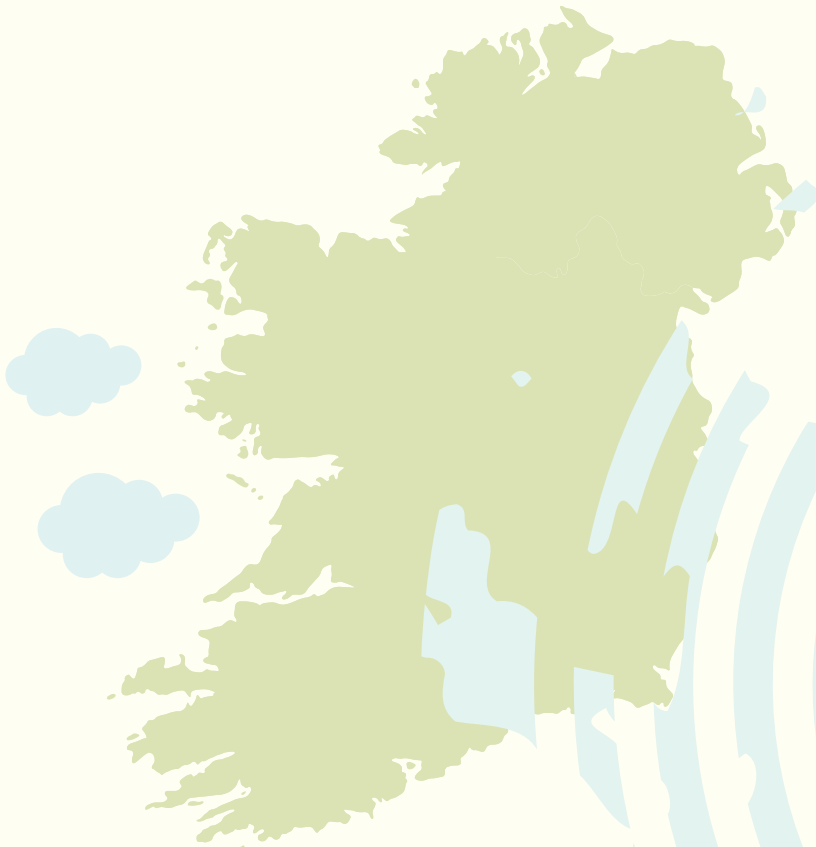


CHILDREN SEEN AND HEARD 1916–2016

Report of consultations with
children and young people on
their vision for Ireland and
on remembering the children
who died in 1916

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The background of the page features a light beige color with decorative elements. In the top right corner, there are several concentric circles in a light beige tone. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized map of Ireland in a light blue color, overlaid with concentric circles in the same blue tone. The text is centered in the middle of the page.


About the report authors

The Child Law Clinic at the School of Law, University College Cork, is a pro-bono legal research service provided by students for lawyers. Staffed by a team of researchers and academic colleagues at the School of Law, together with students on the School's PhD and LLM programmes, the Clinic aims to enhance the understanding and knowledge of issues relating to children's rights, participation and juvenile justice, and to improve the quality of litigation in children's cases, with a view to achieving progressive reform of child law in Ireland and internationally.

Dr Angela O'Connell, post-doctoral researcher at the Child Law Clinic, has extensive experience and expertise in the participation of children and young people. She has worked on a wide range of relevant research, consultancy and training projects in both community and academic settings, including a number of projects for the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and other government departments.

Sarah C Field LLM, research assistant, has previously worked in the Ombudsman for Children's Office and has also contributed to a number of research projects in the Child Law Clinic, including research for the establishment of the DCYA Participation Hub.

Professor Ursula Kilkelly is an international children's rights scholar who has published widely on children's rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and youth justice. She directs the innovative Child Law Clinic, where she leads the research team on projects relating to child rights advocacy, children's participation and children's access to justice.




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(13–18 years)

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Background, introduction and summary of findings

The Citizen Participation Unit of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), recognised as a leading authority on the practice of participation,¹ partnered with *Ireland 2016* and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) on an initiative to involve children and young people in contributing their views to inform the *Ireland 2016* programme and on the future of Ireland. This is in accordance with Articles 12 and 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: children's rights to have their voices heard and taken into account on issues affecting their lives, and to freedom of expression.

DCYA, *Ireland 2016* and the DAHG embarked on a series of six consultations around Ireland with 215 children aged 8–12, and young people aged 13–18, on the theme 'Imagining Our Future'. These consultations provided an opportunity for children and young people to share their views about contemporary Ireland, say what they want to bring into the next century, and share how they wish to commemorate and honour the children who died in 1916 at the children's event for the Centenary Programme.

"I really enjoyed the opportunity to voice my opinion on different aspects of Irish life. With the assurance that they will affect change which is very cool."

(13–18 years)

2

Involving children and young people in decision-making

On 26 May 2015, Dr James Reilly TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, and Ms Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, attended one of the first consultations in Collins Barracks, Dublin with 48 children from primary schools in Dublin (city and county), Louth and Meath. Speaking at the consultation, Minister Humphreys said:

I want children to be at the heart of the Ireland 2016 commemorations. We know that almost 40 children were killed during the Rising, and I want to hear from the schoolchildren of today on how they should be remembered...

Addressing the children, Minister Reilly said:

One of the most important jobs of my Department is to get the opinions of children on many topics because children and young people have very valuable and useful ideas to contribute to improving policies and services and to making Ireland a better place to be a child.

This report contains the findings from these consultations and was presented by children and young people to Ministers and other key decision-makers at the *Ireland 2016* Children's State Ceremonial event in Áras an Uachtaráin in June 2016.

¹ Kilkelly, Martin, Swirak and Field, (2015) *Policy and Literature Review of Goal 1 of the National Children's Strategy, 2000-2010*. Dublin: Government Publications. Available at: www.dcyia.ie.

Findings from the consultations

Top votes

Voted top 'likes' about Ireland

Table A Top 'likes' voted by 8–12 year-olds		
Consultation 1	Consultation 2	Consultation 3
1. Ireland is safe from war.	1. Freedom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » independence » human rights » free to go outside without worry » democracy (votes) 	1. Irish traditions including culture, music, dancing, sport, language and food
2. Education (availability of)	2. Joint second place: Equality – we are the first country to vote on gay marriage. Green environment with no pollution	2. We like the Irish language and want to keep it from dying out.

Table B Top 'likes' voted by 13–18 year-olds		
Consultation 4	Consultation 5	Consultation 6
1. Culture and language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Games » Dancing » Music » Literature » Arts » History » Folklore 	1. Culture and heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Accents » Gaeltacht » Irish dancing » Irish music/ballads » Sports/GAA » Language » Agriculture » History » Humour » Foclóir » Proud people 	1. Our history, culture and heritage (including language, sports, country and traditions)
2. Irish pride <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Football, rugby and supporters » Patriotic St Patrick's Day » Irish communities around the world » People claiming Irish heritage 	2. Comhairle na nÓg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Voices are appreciated and listened to. » Young people have a voice. 	2. Our democracy and the voice of young people

Voted top 'bins' about Ireland

Table C Top 'bins' voted by 8–12 year-olds

Consultation 1	Consultation 2	Consultation 3
1. Drugs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Experiment with drugs. » You can get addicted. » Drugs can kill you. » Children can get very worried if they see them taking them. 	1. Racism and drugs	1. Drink (alcohol) and drugs
2. Joint second place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Bullying » Suicide 	2. Stereotypical image of Ireland (drunk, leprechauns who live in a bar)	2. Bin cigarettes and toxic waste.

Table D Top 'bins' voted by 13–18 year-olds

Consultation 4	Consultation 5	Consultation 6
1. Leaving Certificate and the new points system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The new points system for the Leaving Certificate » We need a new form of assessment. » Fairer representation » Look at the whole person. » Don't have all results based on one exam. 	1. The hoodie stigma (teenagers aren't all bad)	1. Points race puts too much pressure on young people.
2. Discrimination, inequality, racism, homophobia and xenophobia	2. Mental health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » lack of services » social media bullying » negative stigma 	2. End suicide.

4

"Boxes giving false information on foods, e.g. no added sugar."
(8–12 years)

"Body issues – people being judged with how they look for issues they can't help."
(13–18 years)

Voted top 'changes' for Ireland

Table E Top 'changes' voted by 8–12 year-olds

Consultation 1	Consultation 2	Consultation 3
1. Old, abandoned houses should be fixed up – could be used to help homeless people.	1. Obesity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ireland becoming one of fattest countries » Get children exercising and have less time in front of screens. 	1. Smoking
2. Child abuse	2. Stop poverty and homelessness by creating more jobs for people with no college education.	2. End racism and bullying.

Table F Top 'changes' voted by 13–18 year-olds

Consultation 4	Consultation 5	Consultation 6
1. Poverty and homelessness	1. Mental illness to be treated like a physical illness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Free facilities » Free treatments » Free counselling 	1. Education system in Ireland
2. Introduce the right to die in Ireland for terminally ill people.	2. Joint second place: <p>Rural views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Religion » Equality » Narrow-minded views <p>The education system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Leaving Certificate points » Focus on academic » Better DARE opportunities (Disability Access Route to Education) » Better education system, e.g. sex education, extracurricular qualifications 	2. Joint second place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lack of facilities for both physical and mental health » Deal with the homeless situation.

"We have our own unique language and culture."
(13–18 years)

The consultations

Methodology

The methodologies adopted for these consultations were designed to enable children and young people to play an important role in the national celebrations during the centenary of 1916, and to identify the future they want for Ireland into the next century.

Children and young people from primary schools, Comhairle na nÓg and other organisations were selected to participate in the consultations, four of which were held in Dublin and two of which were held in Limerick. Officials from *Ireland 2016* attended all of the consultations.

DCYA worked closely with the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) and the 31 Comhairlí na nÓg to ensure the involvement of a broad mix of children and young people in the consultations. In identifying the schools to be invited, considerable effort went into ensuring a mix of urban DEIS schools, rural DEIS schools, schools with a high percentage of non-national children, Educate Together schools, Gaelscoileanna and schools with a broad mix of pupils. A number of organisations that work with seldom-heard children and young people were also invited to send children to the events.

A letter was sent to the principals of the 58 selected primary schools, inviting them to send four children to attend the consultations, one child from each 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class, and, if a mixed school, to select two boys and two girls. Principals were asked to select a diverse group of children to reflect different abilities, backgrounds, ethnicity, cultures and beliefs. Twenty Comhairlí na nÓg, and members of a number of other groups representing children with disabilities and children with experience of care, were also represented at the consultations.

Description of the planning and development of the consultations and methodologies

The draft methodology for these consultations was developed by DCYA and involved a two-stage process. The first stage aimed to capture the children and young people's views about the Ireland they live in, naming their likes, things they would like to 'bin' and things they would like to change. The second stage asked them for their ideas for commemorating the children who died in 1916.

This methodology used interactive and mixed methods, including discussion, writing, drawing, sticky dot voting, secret ballot, video, movement and games. A 'wall of ideas' was available for the children and young people to write on throughout the day, and subsequently share their ideas and views. The question on the wall read: 'What do you want for children from 2016 onwards?'

The methodology was piloted in early May 2015, and the first two consultations took place in Collins Barracks, Dublin on 25 and 26 May 2015; the other four consultations were held in Limerick and Dublin in September and October 2015. A total of 215 children and young people (96 males and 119 females) aged between 8 and 18 years took part in the six consultations. The participants comprised 136 children aged 8–12 years (60 males and 76 females) from 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class, and 78 young people aged 13–18 years (35 males and 43 females).² Between 21 and 48 children and young people took part in each consultation.³

² See Appendix 3 for a further breakdown of participants.

³ See Appendix 7: Methodology for recording the consultations.



Figure 2: Wall of ideas

On arrival, participants were greeted with refreshments, and lunch was provided on the day. The children were introduced to the consultation process by a representative from *Ireland 2016*, and a facilitator from DCYA described the process. It was explained that approximately 300 children and young people would take part in a series of six consultations to be held around Ireland. A report would be written and would be presented to the President, the Taoiseach and other government ministers at a children's event in 2016, and all of the participants' ideas and a copy of the report would be placed in a large metal time capsule and buried in the ground in Áras an Uachtaráin, to be dug up in the future by other children. Participants were told that they were to think of themselves as representing all the children of Ireland and they should pick the best things, not just their personal favourites, for the future of Ireland.



Figure 3: Considering the issues

After the consultation format was introduced to the group, a number of facilitated games and icebreakers helped the participants to relax and get to know each other. The large group was divided into smaller working groups and each was given a placemat. The placemats, made of heavy paper, measured five square feet. They were set on large round tables, or on the floor, as the work space for groups of children and young people to write and draw with coloured markers. Consultation questions were written on the placemat and the discussion in each group was led by a facilitator.



Participants were asked to write their views about the things they like about Ireland, the things they would get rid of (bin), and the things they would like to change. This was followed by a sticky dot vote to identify the top issues in each category, and these were displayed together with the top votes from the other tables.

A secret ballot followed, where each participant could vote for their top 'like', 'bin' and 'change' idea. While this was under way, some groups visited the wall of ideas while others were illustrating their ideas on the placemats.

After lunch, the focus shifted to how to remember and honour the children who died in 1916. A short video was shown, followed by an information session. A card containing a short profile of an individual child who died in 1916 was given to each participant, and they were asked to introduce their child to their group. The participants were then divided into pairs and were asked to discuss how they felt the children who died in 1916 would like to be remembered 100 years on. Participants were then invited to record their views on a dedicated floormat and share their ideas with the group.



Figure 4: Voting at the ballot box

At the end of the session, the results of the morning's votes were announced and it was explained that the ideas receiving the most votes would be placed in the time capsule.

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation form which asked them about their experiences of the consultation, and for any further comments. A random sample of the children present was then invited to participate in exit interviews to share their experiences of the day with a UCC researcher who audio recorded their responses, in order to evaluate their understanding of their participation. In total, 38 children and young people took part in exit interviews.

"We should not have to pay for water because it comes from the sky."

(8–12 years)

Time capsule: 'Likes', 'bins' and 'changes'

In groups at separate tables, children and young people were asked to write their individual views about Ireland on a large map of the country, with the landmass denoting things they like, the deep ocean, aspects of Ireland that they would like to 'bin', and coastal waters representing things they would like to change. Children and young people engaged enthusiastically with this exercise and in some sessions wrote and drew extensively on the mats, thus providing a large amount of rich data.

This method allowed all participants, confident or quiet, to contribute in their own words or images, at their own pace, without fear of being challenged by others or having to explain or justify their views. Where children had difficulty expressing themselves, an adult provided support. There was a great deal of animated discussion at all work stations and, in order to capture the range of views, the data were analysed by 'likes', 'bins' and 'changes' according to age group.



Figure 4: Likes, bins and changes

Issues raised in consultations

Children and young people expressed a wealth of ideas overall, and a number of issues were common in discussions across the different consultations; such issues included school and education, homelessness, bullying, water charges (highly topical at the time of the consultations), drugs, sports and litter.

Some issues were more dominant in discussions among younger children; such issues included bullying, homelessness, nature and the environment (including litter), people, food, drugs, smoking and water charges. Education, culture, language, politics and health (including mental health) featured more prominently in the discussions among teenagers. There was also a greater focus on inequality and discrimination among older teens.

Other variations were also noted, perhaps influenced by individuals within the group. For example, sessions where young people with disabilities participated involved greater discussions of disability-related issues such as wheelchair access and respite, and at one of the teenager consultations Comhairle na nÓg was voted into the top two 'likes'. Each group discussed their views on their placemat and thematised the ideas in each category – 'likes', 'bins' and 'changes'. Using a sticky dot voting method, they then decided on the top issues to put forward for voting by the entire group. After the ballot, the two top issues in each category were announced.⁴

"Our culture is very strong."

(8–12 years)

"Less of a divide between urban and rural areas."

(13–18 years)

⁴ See Appendix 4 for the top issues identified at each consultation.

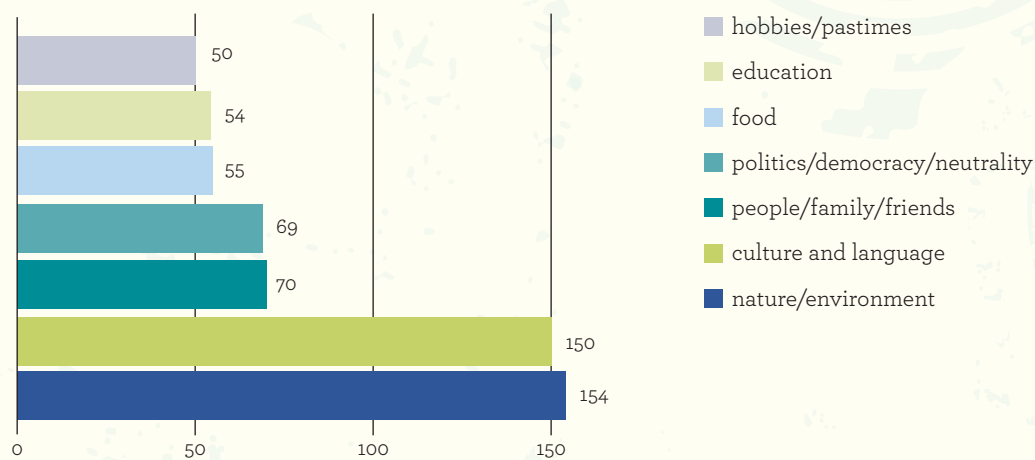
'Likes'

Children and teenagers were effusive in their praise of, and pride in, Ireland during the discussions, with the number of 'likes' numbered in the hundreds in some sessions. When the number of mentions of specific topics was analysed, the top four categories of 'likes' in each age group were almost identical, although prioritised differently between the two age groups. The top four categories were:

- » culture and language
- » people/family/friends
- » politics/equality
- » nature and environment

"In 100 years
we have come from
so little to a 1st world
country that has
achieved amazing things."
(8-12 years)

'Likes' 8-12 year-olds



Children (8-12 years) were effusive about their love of Ireland's natural beauty, farms, wildlife, mountains, beaches, unspoiled green spaces, and the lack of pollution:

The air is fresh and safe to breathe. (8-12 years)

Irish culture and language were highly valued and included music, national sports, Irish dancing, monuments and places of historical, cultural and tourist interest and beauty.

Although related to culture, food was given a separate category due to the number of such mentions. Children spoke about traditional Irish food, including bacon and cabbage, brown bread, 'spuds' and stew, as well as less traditional, but still considered Irish, products such as Tayto crisps and Dairy Milk chocolate, alongside general foods including fast food, roast chicken and sweets.

Ireland was seen as a place where people are warm, kind and friendly, and where family and friends are valued. It was also seen as a country where 'Irish children have a lot of rights' and can enjoy freedom and democracy, as well as neutrality.

I like that Ireland doesn't have too much enemies. (8-12 years)

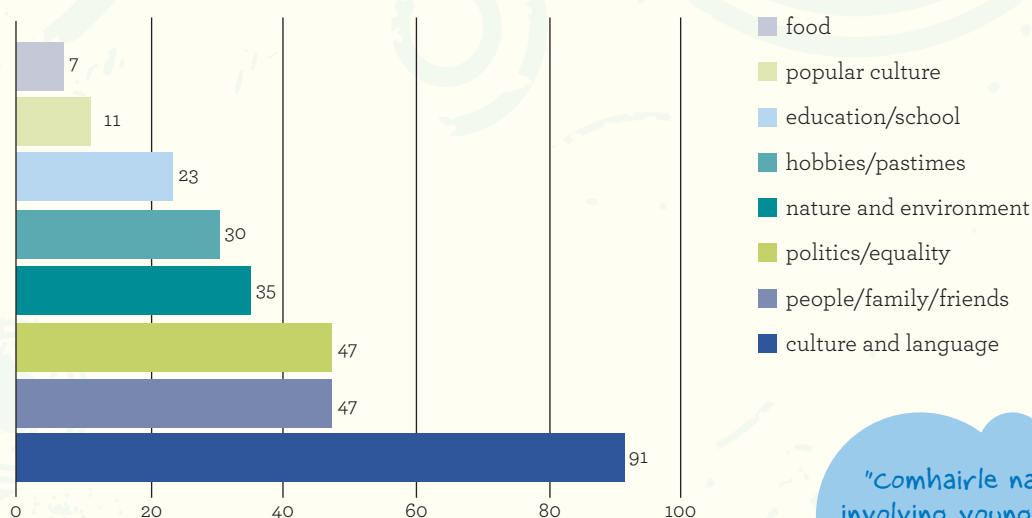
A large number of children described their access to a range of hobbies and pastimes, as well as education and school, as things they like about Ireland. They said that 'Ireland has a good education' with a lot of choice, and that they liked their school and their school friends.

In school, we learn what we are ready to learn and we don't learn what we're not ready to learn. (8-12 years)

"Because it's
the home of spuds."
(8-12 years)

"Irish beef are
usually made fresh
from Irish farmers."
(8-12 years)

'Likes' 13–18 year-olds



Like the younger age group, teenagers expressed enormous pride in their cultural heritage and language, with some considering the Irish language to be 'a huge part of our heritage'. People, friends and community were also among the most frequently liked topics, with numerous references to the openness, friendliness and connectedness of people in Ireland. Political issues also rated highly in this category, including that young people are listened to, especially in Comhairle na nÓg; that Ireland has achieved gender equality and LGBT rights; and that Ireland enjoys good international relations, democracy and freedom.

"Comhairle na nÓg involving young people in events that affect them."

(13–18 years)

"I like how there's lots of animals around every part of Ireland."

(8–12 years)

Top-voted 'likes'

Pride in Irish culture, language and tradition featured as children and young people's top-voted 'likes'. Living in a safe and free democratic society also emerged as a dominant theme. Comhairle na nÓg, through which older groups were largely recruited, was voted among the top 'likes' by teenagers, who also voted for the fact that they have a voice in Ireland; in addition, both age groups voted in favour of the inclusivity and the sense of community that they experience living in Ireland.

Table A Top 'likes' voted by 8–12 year-olds

Consultation 1	Consultation 2	Consultation 3
1. Ireland is safe from war.	1. Freedom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » independence » human rights » free to go outside without worry » democracy (votes) 	1. Irish traditions including culture, music, dancing, sport, language and food
2. Education (availability of)	2. Joint second place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Equality – we are the first country to vote on gay marriage. » Green environment with no pollution 	2. We like the Irish language and want to keep it from dying out.

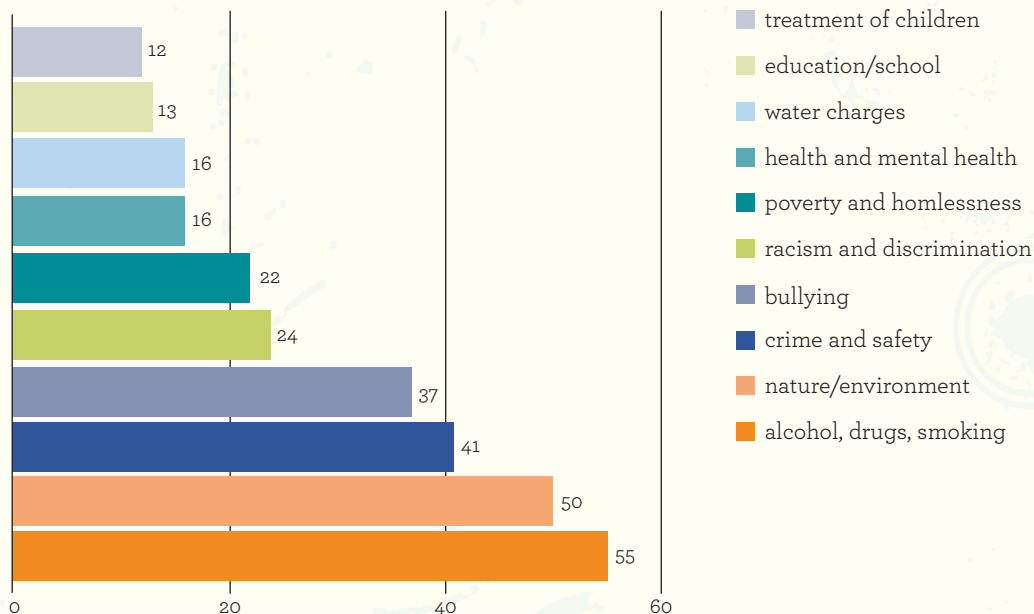
Table B Top 'likes' voted by 13–18 year-olds

Consultation 4	Consultation 5	Consultation 6
1. Culture and language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Games » Dancing » Music » Literature » Arts » History » Folklore 	1. Culture and heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Accents » Gaeltacht » Irish dancing » Irish music/ballads » Sports/GAA » Language » Agriculture » History » Humour » Foclóir » Proud people 	1. Our history, culture and heritage (including language, sports, country and traditions)
2. Irish pride <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Football, rugby and supporters » Patriotic St Patrick's Day » Irish communities around the world » People claiming Irish heritage 	2. Comhairle na nÓg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Voices are appreciated and listened to. » Young people have a voice. 	2. Our democracy and the voice of young people

'Bins'

Discussions relating to 'bins' were more difficult to initiate with all groups, and both children and teenagers mentioned far fewer 'bins' than 'likes' in every consultation. The top 'bins' mentioned were quite different between the two age groups, with bullying being the only common category in the top four mentions across both age groups.

'Bins' 8–12 year-olds



Younger children (8–12 years) mentioned alcohol abuse, smoking and issues related to crime, safety and bullying in the top four categories of things they dislike about Ireland. Pollution, littering and dumping, as well as animal cruelty and hunting, were second only to dislike of substance use and abuse. Issues such as robberies, violence, kidnapping, drug dealing and murder were also frequently mentioned. With regard to social injustice, racism and discrimination figured prominently in their discussions and some referred to xenophobia, homophobia and gender inequality as aspects of Ireland that they would like to bin.

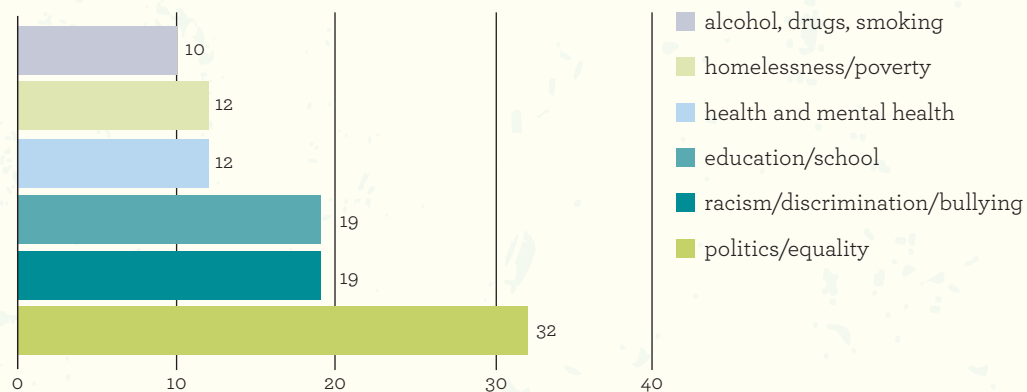
Homelessness was a common dislike, as well as issues such as cancer and diseases, obesity and suicide, and the need to improve health services.

Children also frequently mentioned water charges as one of the things they dislike, but just a few said they disliked school or the education system.

Some children mentioned child abuse and mistreatment as things they would like to bin.

No racism,
respect others."
(8–12 years)

'Bins' 13–18 year-olds



Teenagers most frequently mentioned issues related to politics and equality, racism, discrimination and bullying. They also disliked a number of things about the education system, including issues of access to third-level education, especially the points system, and school-related issues such as exam pressure, the teaching of Irish and other languages, the influence of the Church in schools and rules about appearance and uniforms. In relation to health and mental health, in addition to references to poor supports for mental health, there were also mentions of long waiting times for services and in hospitals.

"I don't like
the way people had to
vote on the gay marriage
referendum because people
should love who they want."
(8–12 years)

"Get rid of homework
because we do enough
work in school and we could
play outside instead of
doing homework."
(8–12 years)

Top-voted 'bins'

In the voting, participants aged 8–12 years identified substance abuse as their top issue, and they also voted bullying, suicide, racism, toxic waste and stereotypical images of Ireland as top aspects of Ireland that they would like to bin.

Teenagers voted on social and personal issues such as the education system (the Leaving Certificate and points system were highlighted as placing undue pressure on young people); they also voted on issues such as mental health and suicide, as well as inequality, discrimination and stigma across a range of categories.

"Points system as a fair representation – look at the whole person – don't have all results based on one exam."

(13–18 years)

Table C Top 'bins' voted by 8–12 year-olds

Consultation 1	Consultation 2	Consultation 3
1. Drugs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Experiment with drugs » You can get addicted. » Drugs can kill you. » Children can get very worried if they see them taking them. 	1. Racism and drugs	1. Drink (alcohol) and drugs
2. Joint second place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Bullying » Suicide 	2. Stereotypical image of Ireland (drunk, leprechauns who live in a bar)	2. Bin cigarettes and toxic waste.

13

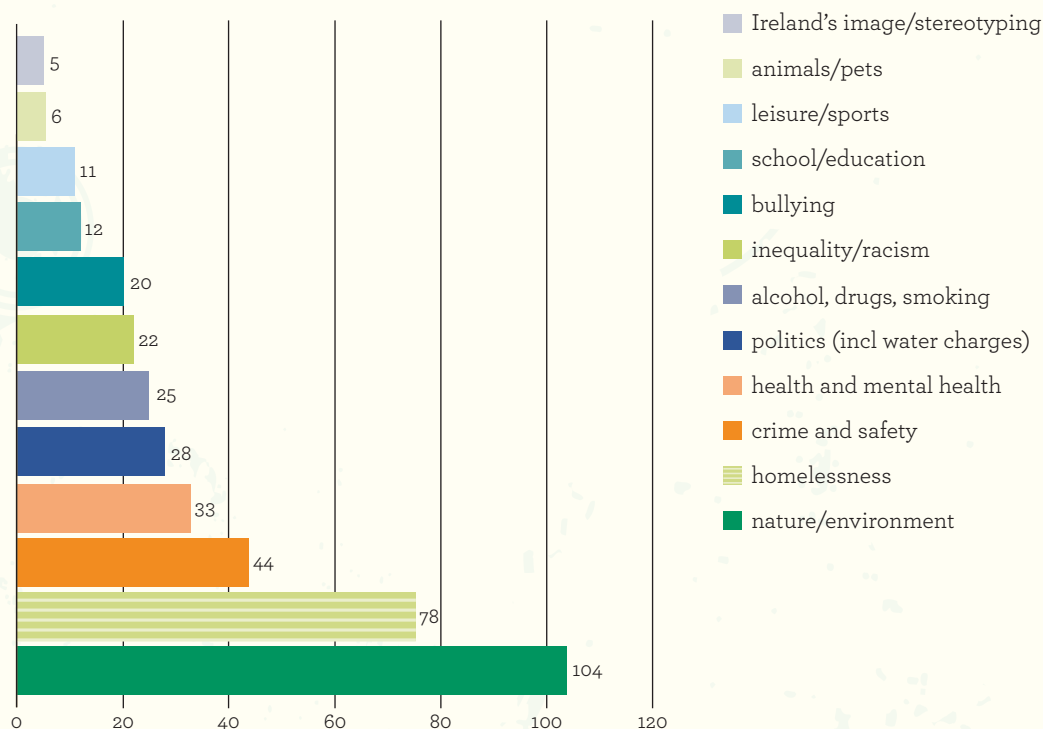
Table D Top 'bins' voted by 13–18 year-olds

Consultation 4	Consultation 5	Consultation 6
1. Leaving Certificate and the new points system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The new points system for the Leaving Certificate » We need a new form of assessment. » Fairer representation » Look at the whole person. » Don't have all results based on one exam. 	1. The hoodie stigma (teenagers aren't all bad)	1. Points race puts too much pressure on young people.
2. Discrimination, inequality, racism, homophobia and xenophobia	2. Mental health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » lack of services » social media bullying » negative stigma 	2. End suicide.

'Changes'

Homelessness and poverty, together with health and mental health, featured among the top four mentions in both age groups, but there were striking differences in the prioritisation of a range of other issues.

'Changes' 8–12 year-olds



Younger children (8–12 years) showed high levels of concern about nature and the environment, with many children commenting about the cutting down of trees, global warming, pollution and littering:

Ireland is pretty clean but the pollution and littering is not noticed – people don't actually get fined for not picking up after their dogs and littering. (8–12 years)

Homelessness and poverty were mentioned very frequently, and calls for more houses to be built and improvements in supports for unemployed people also featured.

I wish there was no people without houses on the street. (8–12 years)

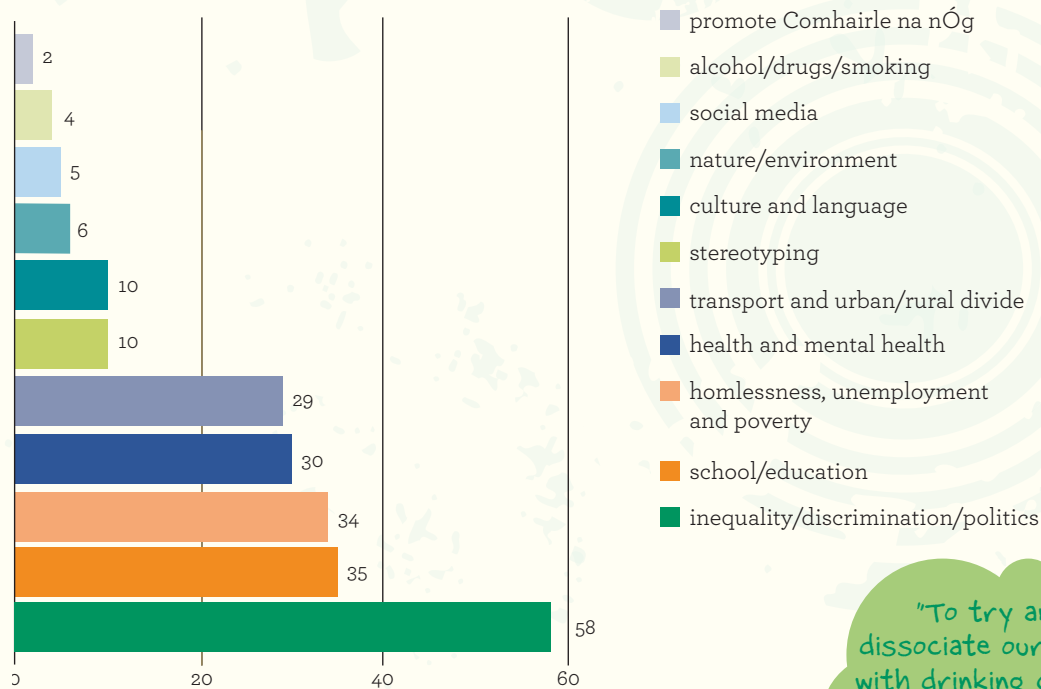
Crime and safety were high on the list of priorities, with children mentioning robbery and violence as well as online safety and corruption.

A number of children mentioned issues related to health and mental health, including obesity, self-harm, suicide, the need for 'bigger hospitals and more doctors' and for 'more depression/mental health support groups'.

A large number of children mentioned water charges as well as a range of other political topics such as 'the Government always looking for money', taxes, changes to the role of the President, better transport, cycle paths and more building in counties other than Dublin.

Among this age group, alcohol, drugs and smoking were also seen as issues requiring change. Issues related to bullying, school, leisure and changing the stereotypes of Ireland as a drinking culture also featured, although less prominently.

'Changes' 13–18 year-olds



Social issues were highly topical among teenagers at the consultations. These issues included voting rights for under-18s, homelessness, high rents, as well as jobs and equal pay for young people:

Employment rights for young people are often bypassed by employers – more attention should be paid to our work rights. (13–18 years)

"To try and dissociate ourselves with drinking culture and discourage it."
(13–18 years)

15

The education system was also seen as requiring a number of important changes, particularly as the points system for access to third level was described as putting pressure on young people and forcing them to make career choices at a very young age. Suggestions were made that this system should be replaced by something fairer, such as the interview system used in the UK. There were also suggestions that young people should have more of a voice in school, and that religion should be separated from schools.

Health, with a particular emphasis on mental health, was an area of concern across the consultations. There were calls for more supports for young people with mental health problems and the need to address the stigma attached to talking about mental health issues. The health system overall was seen as requiring changes.

One of the issues that came up in this age group was the urban/rural divide, with services such as transport, youth facilities and jobs needing to be more fairly distributed throughout the country. Stereotyping of the Irish as drinkers, as well as substance abuse and misuse, were also issues that teenagers wished to see changes in.

Top-voted 'changes'

Poverty and homelessness were voted as the top areas where both younger children and teenagers wanted to see change. Both age groups also focused on health, with children identifying obesity and smoking as their top priorities, together with bullying, racism and child abuse. Teenagers were particularly concerned about issues relating to facilities for both physical and mental illness; the right to die for the terminally ill, and the perception of religious, narrow-minded views emanating from a rural background. Many young people raised issues relating to equality and discrimination, in respect of lowering the voting age, gender equality, anti-discrimination and providing more jobs and affordable education opportunities for young people.

"Cheaper, better public transport."
(13–18 years)

The education system was again identified as an area of concern among teenagers; concerns included the focus on academic outcomes and the Leaving Certificate points system, and disability access to education opportunities, as well as better sex education and extracurricular qualifications.

"More depression/mental health support groups."
(8–12 years)

Overall, the issues identified throughout the different consultations demonstrate that both younger children and teenagers have a strong sense of social justice and equality, with many taking the view that Ireland could do better in this regard.

Table E Top 'changes' voted by 8–12 year-olds

Consultation 1	Consultation 2	Consultation 3
1. Old, abandoned houses should be fixed up – could be used to help homeless people.	1. Obesity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ireland becoming one of fattest countries » Get children exercising and have less time in front of screens. 	1. Smoking
2. Child abuse	2. Stop poverty and homelessness by creating more jobs for people with no college education.	2. End racism and bullying.

Table F Top 'changes' voted by 13–18 year-olds

Consultation 4	Consultation 5	Consultation 6
1. Poverty and homelessness	1. Mental illness to be treated like a physical illness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Free facilities » Free treatments » Free counselling 	1. Education system in Ireland
2. Introduce the right to die in Ireland for terminally ill people.	2. Joint second place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Rural views » Religion » Equality » Narrow-minded views » The education system » Leaving Certificate points » Focus on academic » Better DARE opportunities (Disability Access Route to Education) » Better education system, e.g. sex education, extracurricular qualifications 	2. Joint second place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lack of facilities for both physical and mental health » Deal with the homeless situation.

Commemorating the children and young people who died in 1916

During the consultations, the participants were asked for their ideas about how they would like to commemorate the children and young people who died in 1916.

Many suggestions focused on permanent commemorations, whereas others centred on an event or activity for children and young people which would celebrate and honour those whose lives were lost.

Ireland 2016: Children and young people's event

A sizeable number of suggestions in both age categories related to holding a ceremony of some sort, where speeches or presentations would be made to commemorate the children who died in 1916. Many also suggested that children should dress up in the clothes of the children of the time and/or that there should be a re-enactment of the events. Both age categories shared a view that the lives of the children who died should be represented in games of the time, street festivals, plays and photographic or pictorial exhibits. Overall, the ideas fell into five main categories:

- » **Festive events** e.g. parade, street parties, fireworks and music concerts;
- » **Ceremony** e.g. reading out the names of the children who died, lighting candles, a minute's silence;
- » **Re-enactments** e.g. dressing up, playing games that children would have played at that time;
- » **Visual representations** e.g. video and podcasts, displays such as plays, pictures and paintings;
- » **Symbols** e.g. badges, balloons and flags.

Other popular themes included holding a free sporting event for children and young people, planting trees to commemorate those who died, and getting schools involved in the celebrations. One young person suggested the development of an interactive walking tour app that could map the places where children died and provide information about their lives.

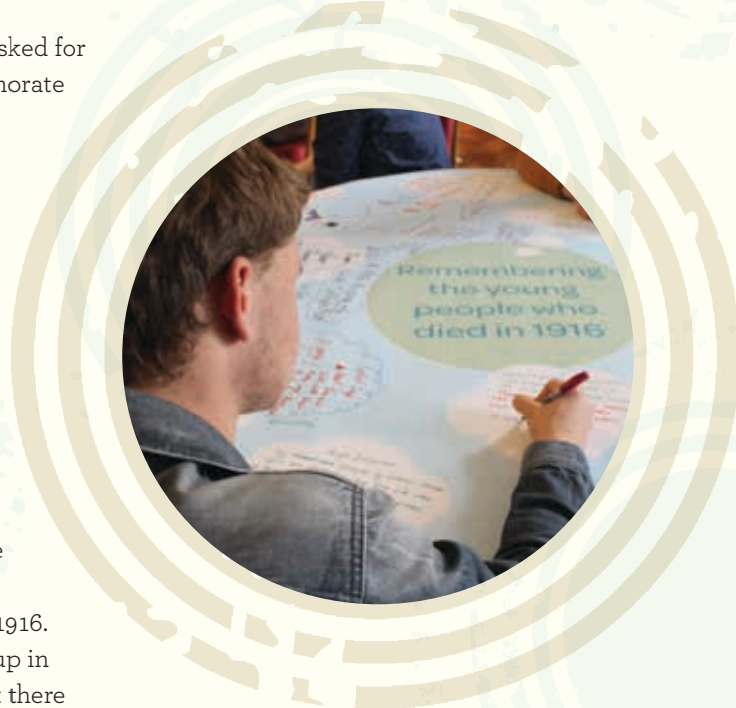


Figure 5: Remember the children who died in 1916

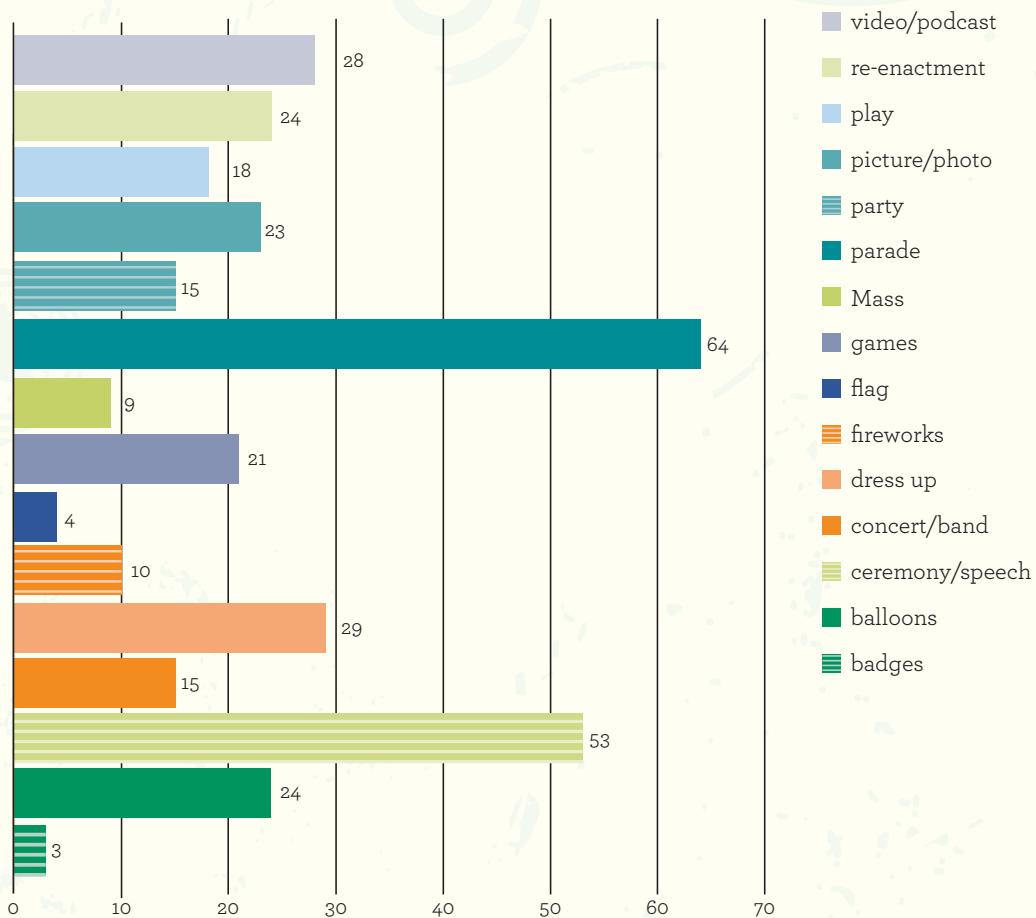
17

"A parade with children dressed up in children's clothes from 1916 and sing songs."
(8–12 years)

"Presentation to the families/descendants of the deceased, invite them to the commemoration ceremony, ask them to speak."
(13–17 years)

Ideas for Ireland 2016 children and young people's event

Ireland 2016 event ideas



These ideas have been broken down by age category, as some clear preferences emerged between the two groups.

Children aged 8-12 years

8-12 year-olds showed a clear preference for a ceremony or speech involving children and young people:

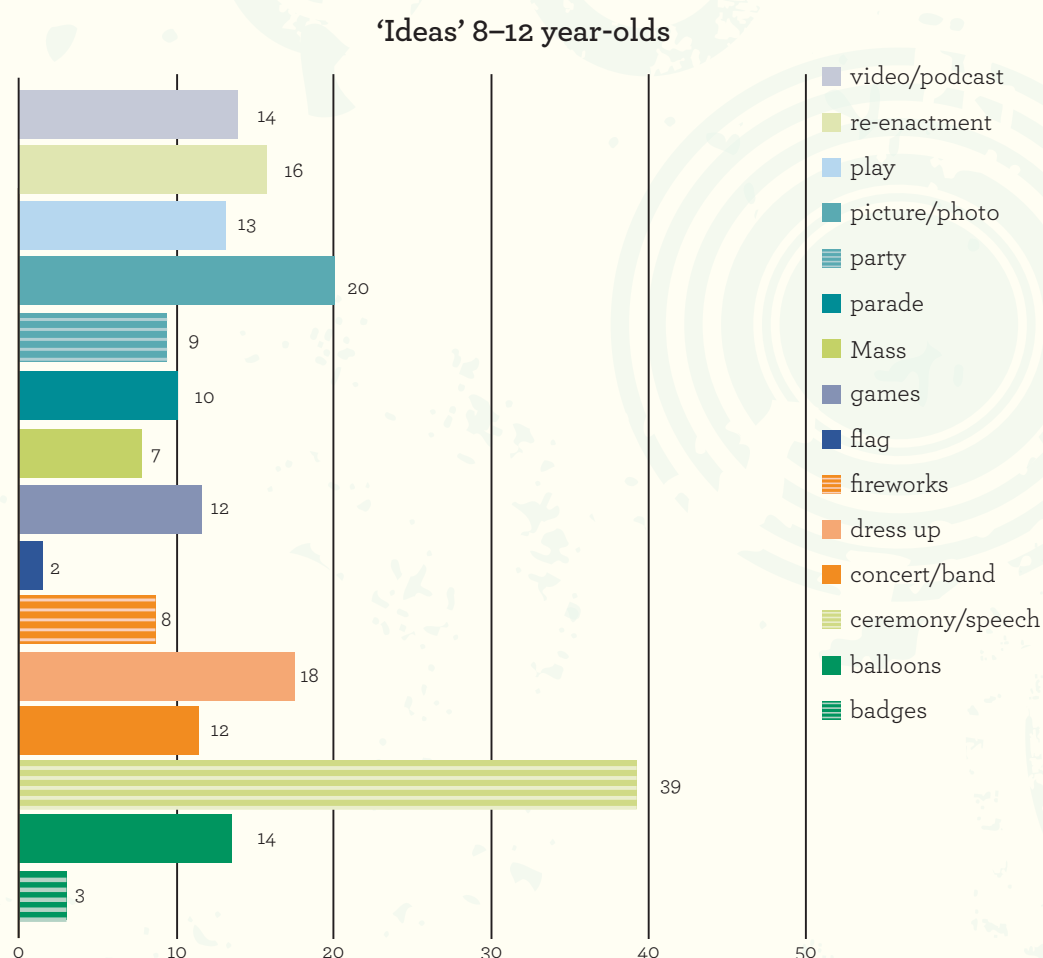
- » Children would read the names of the children who were killed.
- » Young people would speak about the 1916 Rising.
- » Children and young people would plant a tree at the ceremony in memory of those who died.

A large proportion of 8-12 year-olds felt there should be a picture/photo of the child victims to ensure that they are not forgotten:

- » Make a photo album of the children who died, so that they can be remembered.
- » Put a picture of the children's faces and write about what they did and why they died.
- » Make a cut-out in a tree and put every child's name on the tree.

Other suggestions included:

- » a big cake with the names of the children and young people who died in the Rising;
- » plant a flower or a tree for every child who died;
- » a day off school;
- » a 1916-themed fundraiser for children's charities.



Young people aged 13-18 years

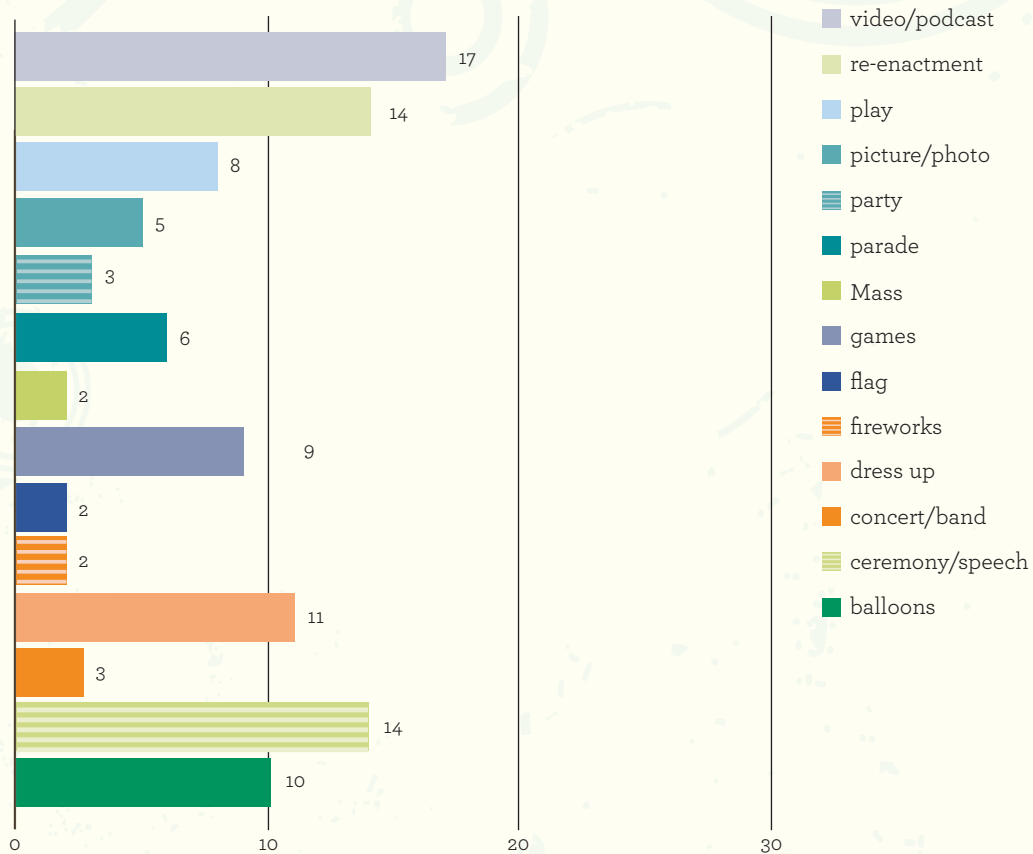
A large number of teenage participants suggested a commemorative ceremony. Engaging in a re-enactment of the time in which the child victims lived was a popular idea; other ideas included playing games, taking part in role plays, eating food or sweets that were popular at the time and acting out small scenes at places of importance, such as the GPO.

In addition to a ceremony, 13-18 year-olds indicated a preference for a visual representation such as a video or podcast – which young people could access from their own locations.

"No discriminating
people with special
needs."

(8-12 years)

'Ideas' 13-18 year-olds



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As well as the ideas categorised in the charts, a broad range of other ideas was suggested by individuals. These included:

- » creating a trail around Dublin city, leading to places of importance during the 1916 Rising – one young person suggested an 'App with info for a walking tour of where the young people and children who died lived' (13-18 years);
- » asking Google to create a Google doodle incorporating each child's name, age and place of death;
- » displaying items, e.g. toys that the children would have played with;
- » laying a wreath at Glasnevin Cemetery, Collins Barracks, Mount Jerome, Deansgrange or other places where the children were buried.

"Voting age to be 16
and for it to be
compulsory to vote."
(13-18 years)

"In the ceremony, children
bring the items for the
children that died and were
their age, and they put the
items into the time capsule and
compare the children."
(8-12 years)

Permanent commemoration of the children who died in 1916

In addition to their ideas about the upcoming event, participants were asked for their ideas and suggestions on how to commemorate the children who died in 1916 on a long-term basis. Their ideas broadly fell into 10 categories:

- » **Wall/monument/gravestone:** This category includes a wall with the names of the deceased children and young people; a commemorative bench; or a bus/train station named after one of the young people killed.
- » **Plaque:** Participants suggested that a commemoration medal be issued to the families of the victims or that a plaque with the names of the victims be sent to every school.
- » **Statue:** Ideas included erecting statues of the victims around Dublin or building a water fountain with the statues of two or three children playing in the middle of it.
- » **Visual representation:** Some young people suggested a painting of the children playing or a poster with the children's names on it.
- » **Playground/park:** Ideas included a playground with basket swings and a roundabout, and a theme park with rides and other activities.
- » **Literary/musical representation:** This category includes commemorative books, songs, poems and plays.
- » **Annual event or holiday:** Ideas included a national day dedicated to the children who died in 1916; an annual parade; and an annual Mass.
- » **Museum:** Some children and young people thought a small museum should be built to remember the children who died in 1916.
- » **Trees:** Some young people suggested that trees should be planted in memory of the child victims in a memorial garden or place of significance such as the Phoenix Park.
- » **Other:** Ideas included establishing a homeless shelter for children in honour of the child victims; issuing postage stamps commemorating the children; and setting up a charity in their name.

"Wall with names and put children's handprints on the wall. People can bring letters or pictures for the wall somewhere like the Phoenix Park."

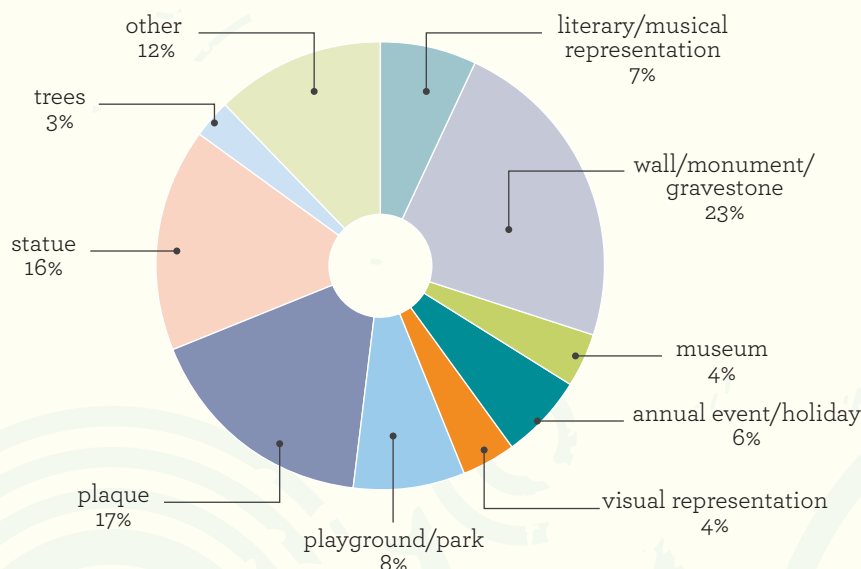
(13–18 years)

21

"Build a statue and carve their names on it and also carve their date of birth to date of their death."

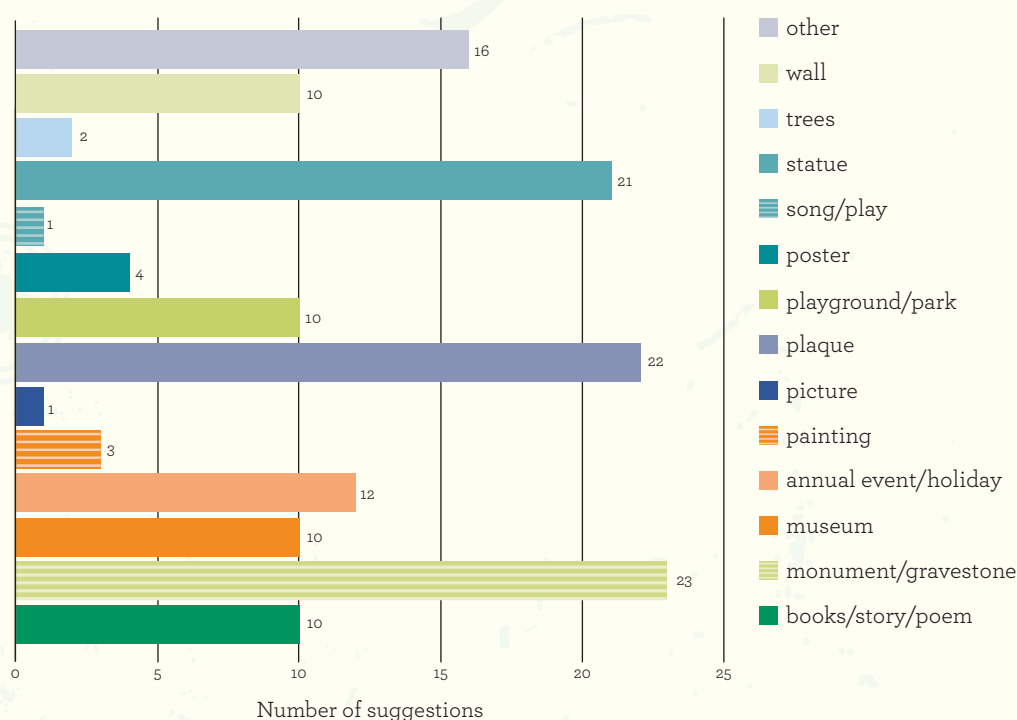
(8–12 years)

Ideas for permanent commemoration



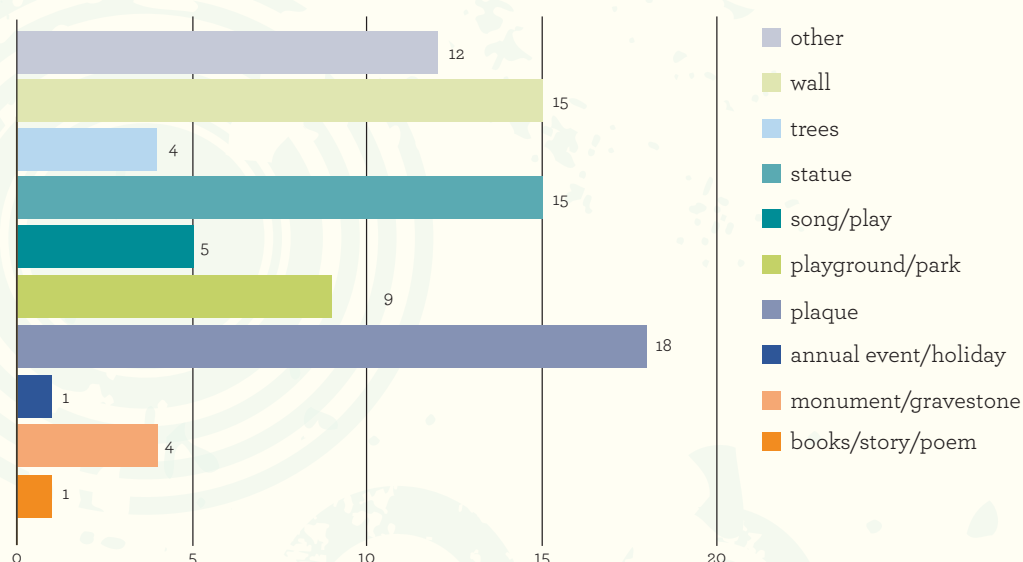
Ideas by age category

Ideas for permanent commemoration from children aged 8–12 years



The younger children had a clear preference to commemorate the children who died in 1916 with some sort of built monument, ideas for which included gravestones, statues, walls, plaques and giving their names to existing buildings or areas. The next most popular idea was a park or playground dedicated to the children who died in 1916. Also very popular were ideas such as an annual holiday or event, including parades and street parties with games and food from the period. Teenagers expressed their preference for a built monument, as well as for a park or playground, but also suggested that the children should be commemorated by the creation of a musical or dramatic symbol. The planting of trees for each child who died was also a popular idea among teenagers.

Ideas for permanent commemoration from young people aged 13–18 years



Wall of ideas

During each consultation, a 'wall of ideas' was available to participants who were invited to contribute their ideas and thoughts about the issues being discussed.

"More rights for populations especially gay people and foreigners."
(8–12 years)

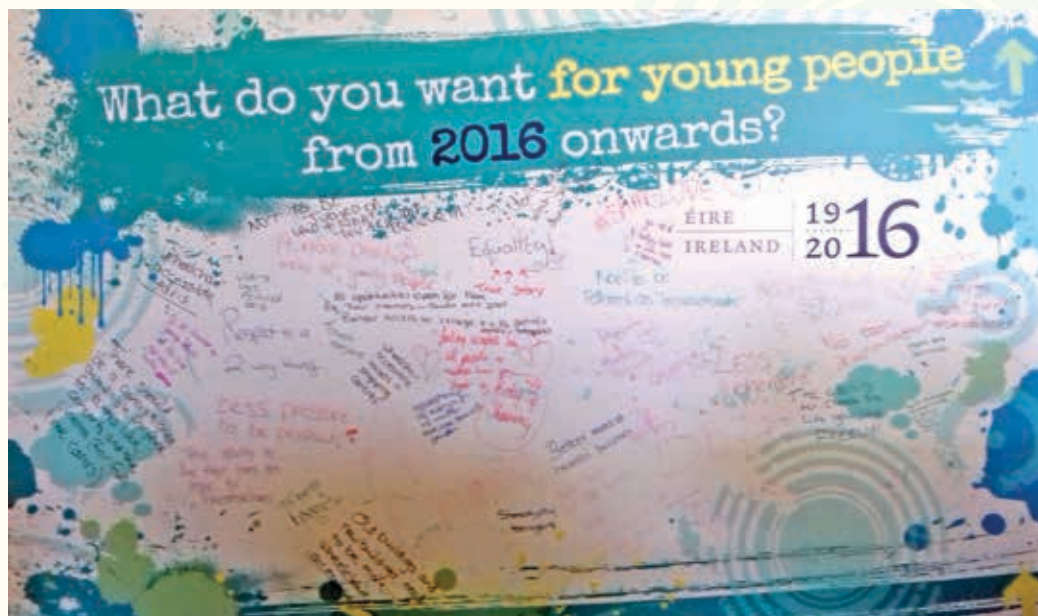


Figure 6: Wall of ideas

The wall was mainly used by children and young people to reiterate and expand on viewpoints which they had raised earlier in the discussions. While not all of the children wrote on the wall, some contributed a range of ideas and others repeated a single idea in a number of places on the board.

Many ideas that appeared on the wall were also discussed during the consultation itself, although there were also mentions of some more sensitive issues such as 'stop allowing parents to hit their children', 'more foster parents for children who have no home', and 'less suicide'. Some used the opportunity to state their personal philosophy on life:

Don't care what other people think, be creative and always see life not for what it is, but what it could be. (8–12 years)

"Stop and discourage Irish stereotypes and drinking culture."
(13–18 years)

The top themes identified from the wall were:

Children aged 8–12 years	Young people aged 13–18 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Bullying/racism » Health and mental health » Rights, equality and discrimination » Sports and facilities » Education » Environment » Homelessness » Happiness and childhood » Drugs/smoking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Acceptance and happiness » Equality and discrimination » Education » Opportunities and access » Reduce voting age » Health and mental health » Irish language and tradition » Government and politics » Homelessness

Evaluations

DCYA evaluation feedback forms

Children and young people who attended the consultations were asked to complete an evaluation form to give feedback on their experiences of the day. Data sets were then analysed to offer an overall picture of the participants' experiences of the consultation process.

- » The vast majority (97%) stated that the day was excellent or very good, and only 3% reported that it was okay. None of the children or teenagers stated that they had had a poor experience.
- » Most of the children and teenagers stated that the day was organised excellently or very well (96%), and some (4%) reported that it was okay. None of the children or teenagers identified that the day was poorly organised.
- » Almost all of the children reported positive feedback on the session – about the things they liked about Ireland, what they would like to bin, and what they would change in Ireland, with the majority (95%) stating that it was an excellent or very good session. A small number of children (4%) felt that this session was okay. None of the children reported that this was a poor session. Just one teenager reported that this was a poor session.
- » The majority of children and teenagers reported positive feedback on the vote on the things they liked, the things they would like to bin, and the things they would change, with 92% stating that it was an excellent or very good session. A small number of children and teenagers (7%) reported that this session was okay. One child and one teenager reported that it was a poor session.
- » For the most part, the children and teenagers reported positive feedback on the session on remembering and honouring the children who died in 1916, with the majority (97%) stating that it was an excellent or very good session. A small number of children and teenagers (3%) reported that it was an okay session. None of the children or teenagers reported that it was a poor session.
- » In general, the children and teenagers were satisfied with how the results of the top-voted topics were organised and put in a time capsule, with the majority (91%) saying that this process was excellent or very good. A small number of children and teenagers (7%) reported that this process was only okay. None of the children reported that this was a poor way of organising the top-voted topics. One teenager reported that this was a poor way of organising the top-voted topics.
- » Overall, the children and teenagers were satisfied with the venue, with the majority (96%) stating that the venue was excellent or very good, whereas a few children and teenagers (4%) said that it was okay. None of the children or teenagers said that it was a poor venue.
- » Generally, the children and teenagers were satisfied with the food available during the consultations, with the majority (85%) stating that the food was excellent or very good, whereas a few children and teenagers (13%) reported that the food was okay. A small number (4%) of children reported that the food was poor. One teenager reported that the food was poor.
- » The children and teenagers identified a vast array of things as being the most positive aspects of the day. The most frequently cited categories among the younger children were the food; the methodology (voting, writing ideas on the map of Ireland, group work, having their voices heard); meeting people (ministers, everyone); honouring those who died in the 1916 Rising; and the 'nice' facilitators. The most frequently cited categories among the teenagers were meeting and socialising with new people; the friendly atmosphere; the methodologies employed (icebreakers, voting, writing, having their voice heard); learning about and honouring those who died in the 1916 Rising; and the food.

"It was great to feel like our opinions matter and that our ideas might actually help other people and make a change in Ireland."

(13–18 years)

- » The vast majority of the children and teenagers stated that they would change nothing about the consultation. However, some children suggested changes relating to the food (drinks); the availability of choice regarding what was put in the 'time capsule' (peat bogs should have been included); the duration of the consultation (making it longer, more time to talk about ideas); and photography (fewer photographs). Some teenagers also suggested changes relating to the food (more choices around food and drinks); opening the consultation to a larger number of people; choices around groupings (age, switch between groups more); the duration of the consultation (make it longer); and the start time (difficult to get to the venue).
- » The children and teenagers were offered the opportunity to provide additional comments. A number of children availed of this opportunity, mainly to provide further feedback of a positive nature using words with positive connotations (excellent, amazing, awesome, interesting, fun) and to express their gratitude. Similarly, the teenagers provided further feedback, largely of a positive nature around methodologies (icebreakers, using videos); reflected on the day using words with positive connotations (amazing, brilliant, fun); expressed their gratitude towards leaders; and requested further consultations like this one. Most of the children and teenagers did not avail of this opportunity to offer additional comments.

Overall comments

By and large, great similarities exist between the experiences of the two age groups. It is apparent that both the younger children and the teenagers enjoyed the consultation process and having their voices heard:

The day was very well organised, so it all ran really smoothly. I loved meeting new people. (13-18 years)

Notably, there were some differences between the age groups in the qualitative feedback session. It is apparent that many teenagers enjoyed the social aspect of the day most and they were more forthcoming in offering negative feedback about what they felt was poor, for example, the duration of the consultation and the availability of choices. By contrast, the positive and negative comments of the younger children both focused mainly on food provided at the event.

Additional comments were highly positive, and most expressed gratitude to the organisers:

I loved this opportunity! Thank you for letting me tell you my ideas. (8-12 years)

Summary and conclusions

There's not many times that we get to say what we don't like about the country and what we do like. (13–18 years)

Summary of findings

Firstly, participants were asked what they like about Ireland, what aspects of Ireland they would like to 'bin', and what they would like to change.

Children and young people who took part in the consultations displayed high levels of pride and love for Ireland and deep appreciation for its beauty, language, history and culture, as well as the inclusiveness and warmth of its people. Despite their levels of pride in the country, Ireland's image in the eyes of the world was viewed as significant, and there was an expressed desire to address stereotypes of the Irish as a nation of drinkers.

In addition to the pride felt about Ireland, there was a desire to improve social conditions for people experiencing marginalisation as a result of homelessness, health and mental health issues, racism and other kinds of stigma and inequality; to make the country safer from crime; to address substance abuse; and to resolve some of the difficulties experienced by young people in the education system. Younger children in particular displayed high levels of concern about drugs, alcohol and smoking.

Although the analysis across the six consultations showed that a variety of different issues had been discussed, the voting preferences of the children and young people themselves form the basis of the final outcomes of this process. The number one votes are set out below.

Likes	Bins	Changes
Ireland is safe from war.	Drugs	Old, abandoned houses should be fixed up – could be used to help homeless people.
Freedom	Racism and drugs	Obesity
Irish traditions including culture, music, dancing, sport, language and food	Drink (alcohol) and drugs	Smoking
Culture and language	Leaving Certificate and the new points system	Poverty and homelessness
Culture and heritage	The hoodie stigma	Mental illness to be treated like a physical illness.
Our history, culture and heritage (including language, sports, country and traditions)	Points race puts too much pressure on young people.	Education system in Ireland

The second part of the consultation asked participants to share their ideas for commemorating the children who died in 1916. These ideas were written up and analysed to assess themes and frequency. The majority of the ideas for the *Ireland 2016* children's event related to holding a ceremony with speeches and presentations to commemorate the children who died in 1916. Many also suggested that children should dress up in the clothes of the children of the time and/or that there be a re-enactment of the events. There was general agreement that the lives of the children who died should be visually represented in games of the time, street festivals, plays and photographic or pictorial exhibits. The ideas for the more permanent memorialisation of these children included a built monument; a park or playground dedicated to the children who died in 1916; an annual holiday or event; the planting of trees; or the creation of a musical or drama.

Participatory methodologies

The methods employed allowed all participants equally to share their views and these, together with icebreakers, movement, breaks and food, provided the children and young people with an environment that was supportive, engaging and fun. The methods used allowed participants to write and draw freely on sticky notelets and on the mats provided, so that everybody had a chance to have a say. Participants who were quieter were able to work on their own and contribute their ideas on their own terms, and more dominant voices did not exert undue influence, as occurs with more verbally based methods. Two stages of voting were involved in producing the final outcomes at each consultation. The first, preceded by a group discussion, was a sticky dot vote to narrow down the issues, while the second was a secret ballot, allowing participants to make their choices unobserved by others. Such an approach could be characterised as a microcosm of direct democracy where free debate precedes a secret ballot.

Although such text-based methods can sometimes pose problems for less literate participants, facilitators worked closely with participants who were experiencing difficulties to help them to express themselves on the mats and on the wall of ideas. Participants were invited to contribute freely and while some wrote clear, methodical lists of issues, others sometimes repeated a single idea in different forms, both on the mats and on the wall of ideas. While the voting stages were successful in diluting this latter approach, such repetition of single issues by individuals is hard to capture when trends are being measured. The voting results are therefore more reliable outcomes from the consultations, whereas the wall of ideas and the graphs provide snapshots of the richness of the discussions that took place among the children and young people in each group.

In line with the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child for good practice in participation, the methodologies used in these consultations were respectful; relevant to the children's lives; child friendly; inclusive; and supported by training. Children were protected from harm, and embedded in the methodology was a commitment to follow up and evaluate the consultations.⁵ Feedback from the children and young people was overwhelmingly positive and the atmosphere at the sessions was energetic and enthusiastic, while simultaneously remaining focused on the issues under discussion.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has stated that transparency, voluntary participation and informed consent are key conditions for the exercise of children's right to participate.⁶ Gatekeepers, such as teachers and youth workers, are, as in this consultation, often necessary contact points for accessing children to take part in consultations, and so it is essential that such gatekeepers understand the importance of the informed consent process and convey this to the children in their care.⁷

When all of these conditions are fulfilled, the consultation process can provide a window into the lived realities of the children and young people who take part, and provide adult decision-makers with access to perspectives that have traditionally been out of sight.

In summary, the methodologies employed for this consultation process included the key elements necessary to engage children and young people in a meaningful way, and resulted in a depth and breadth of data to convey their views on living in contemporary Ireland and to contribute to the plans for the commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising.

⁵ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 12 (2009): The right of the child to be heard, CRC/C/GC/12, section 134 available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC-C-GC-12.pdf> (accessed: 1/2/2016).

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ See Appendix 1: Letter to schools.

Key messages for decision-makers

Children and young people's views on Ireland

- » great pride in Irish culture, language, heritage and tradition;
- » value Ireland as a safe, free and democratic nation;
- » concern regarding issues such as substance abuse, bullying, racism and pollution and crime;
- » desire to address poverty and homelessness as well as the education system, smoking, obesity, mental illness and suicide;
- » dislike of stereotypical views of Irish people.

The above 'likes', 'bins' and 'changes' represent a snapshot of the views of children and young people in the Ireland of 2016. Although these views were documented as part of the centenary celebrations, it is important that, as well as being buried in a time capsule for future generations of children to unearth, these views are seriously considered by politicians and policy-makers when drafting policies or making decisions that will affect the lives of children and young people in Ireland today.

Ireland 2016 children's event – commemoration and celebration

- » A ceremony to commemorate the children who died in 1916;
- » Celebrate the child victims as children – by playing games, dressing up and holding street parties in the style of the time;
- » Walking tours should be provided during the celebrations, including the development of an app to mark the sites where children lived and died;
- » Re-enactments, at relevant sites or in the form of plays or videos, to provide visual information to a wide audience.

Remembering the children who died in 1916 – permanent commemorations

- » built monument, wall, statues or plaques;
- » playground or park;
- » annual event or holiday;
- » musical or drama;
- » trees.

On the basis of evidence that children and young people are experts in their own lives, the views expressed by the participants in this consultation provide a rich source of data to inform the planning of the event for children. The children and young people also welcomed the opportunity for their ideas to be incorporated into the commemoration of the children who died in 1916.

These consultations aimed to capture children and young people's views on the organisation of the 1916 centenary celebrations and commemorating the children who died in 1916. The wide scope of the consultations allowed the voices of a large and varied cohort of children and young people from across Ireland to influence a seminal moment in Ireland's history. The process reflects a solid commitment, among a wide range of stakeholders, to respect and promote children's right to be heard in decisions that affect their lives.

The outcomes to date, including plans to move the National Play Day from its usual scheduling in summer to Easter Monday 2016, and to build a playground dedicated to the children who died in 1916, are a testament to the success of this consultation process and to the collaborative work between the government departments and other agencies involved.

Exit interviews

In order to assess the participants' views and reflections on the consultation process itself, exit interviews were carried out with a random selection of children and young people. They were asked the following:

- » Why did you decide to come?
- » Was it what you thought it would be like?
- » What was the most memorable part of the day?

When asked why they had decided to participate in the consultation, the teenagers (the majority of whom were recruited through Comhairlí na nÓg and other youth organisations) appeared to be well informed about the purpose of the consultations and had volunteered to take part because they were interested in the topic. Many saw it as an opportunity to get involved in the commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising, to learn more about the events of 1916, or to raise issues which they feel are important to young people in Ireland today:

Because I wasn't the most knowledgeable person on the 1916 Rising, especially how children were affected by it, so I thought I'd come along, see if I could learn anything new. Also, the part about going forward for children - what could we do for them - I found that really interesting and I thought that would be something important to have a say in. (13-18 years)

Our youth worker was talking about it and I am really fascinated about the whole 1916 Rising. I wanted to learn more about it - so I thought today would be a good way to learn about how we can take part in remembering the people who died. (13-18 years)

Most of the younger children seemed to understand the theme (if not the process) of the consultations, and said they had volunteered to come, and had won a draw in their class.

Many children and teenagers appeared to have thought that the events would be much more formal and less fun than they turned out to be. Some of the younger children said they had thought the day was going to be about being asked for their opinions, but the vast majority said they found the experience extremely positive:

No, not really. I was expecting to be sitting down watching a PowerPoint presentation or something for like four hours. It was much more active and they took your opinion into account and they wanted to know what you thought. So, it was much more interactive. (13-18 years)

Children and young people were effusive about their enjoyment of the consultations, and many referred to aspects of the methodology as being particularly memorable. Younger children were more likely to mention the opportunity to draw on the placemats, whereas teenagers were enthusiastic about the voting. Both age groups enjoyed the video.

When we got to draw on the placemat thing, the map of Ireland. (8-12 years)

Getting to vote for the things that we liked and wanted to change and didn't like. (13-18 years)

"The best thing about the day was having the opportunity to vote."

(8-12 years)

"I thought that we would have to sit in rows and the people were just going to throw questions at you about what happened in 1916, but it was actually fun."

(8-12 years)



Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter to schools

Consultation with children and young people for *Ireland 2016*

Tuesday 25 May
Collins Barracks, Dublin

Dear _____,

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has joined forces with *Ireland 2016* and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to involve children and young people in giving their views on the future of Ireland.

We will host consultations with children aged 8–12 and young people aged 13–18 on the theme ‘Imagining Our Future’. 50 children will be selected to participate in each of six consultations.

The first consultation will take place on 25 May in Collins Barracks, Dublin.

At the consultations, children and young people will give their views on how they see the future of Ireland and what they want to bring into the next century.

They will also be asked for their views on how to honour the children who died in 1916.

The outcomes of their consultations will be compiled in a report to be presented by them to Ministers and decision-makers at a major children’s event in April 2016. In addition, their suggestions about how to honour the children who died in 1916 will be incorporated into the event. The children’s event will honour the children of the past and the children of the present – focusing on their wishes for the future of Ireland.

We would like to invite you to send **four children to attend the consultation** on 25 May in Collins Barracks, Dublin. We would ask if you could send **one child from each 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class**. If your school is a mixed school, please select two boys and two girls. The consultation will take place from 11.00am – 2.30pm.

In selecting children to take part in the *Ireland 2016* consultation, I would ask you to **select a mix of children to reflect different abilities, backgrounds, ethnicity, culture and beliefs**.

Ireland belongs to all of our children and we want the consultations to allow children to honestly identify the future they want for our country.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will:

- » pay the costs of a substitute teacher to accompany the children;
- » pay all travel costs for teachers and students;
- » support you in making arrangements for attendance at this consultation.

This is a wonderful opportunity for children and young people to play an important role in the national celebrations around the centenary of 1916 and in giving their views on the future of Ireland. We really hope your school can take part.

Karyn Farrell, our Participation Administrator, will be in contact with you next week with consent forms, directions to Collins Barracks and other practical details.

In the meantime, please let me know if children from your school can take part in this exciting project.

Kind regards,

Anne O'Donnell
Head of Citizen Participation, Play, Recreation and Culture

Appendix 2: DCYA sample consultation methodology

30 September and 1 October 2015

THEME: IMAGINING OUR FUTURE

Wall of ideas: What do you want for children and young people from 2016 onwards?

11.30am Introduction, games and icebreakers – informed about putting their top priorities in a time capsule

12.00 The things you like, the things you would change, and the aspects of Ireland that you would get rid of

1. What do you like about Ireland?
2. What would you like to change about Ireland?
3. What aspects of Ireland would you like to bin?
 - » Sticky dot the three sections of the floormat (different colour dots for each section)
 - » Pick top two from each of the three categories
 - » Working on dedicated sheets, give more detail about the top two in each category
 - » Adult assistants write the top two in each category, with some detail on 12 individual cards (matching colours to dots), starting with 'LIKES'

VOTING on LIKES

- » One group at a time to the voting station to vote on the top 12 likes
- » Meanwhile, some groups visit the wall of ideas
- » Each group is illustrating their ideas on the floormats

VOTING on CHANGES

- » One group at a time to the voting station to vote on the top 12 changes
- » Meanwhile, some groups visit the wall of ideas
- » Each group is illustrating their ideas on the floormats

VOTING on 'GETTING RID OF'

- » One group at a time to the voting station to vote on the top 12 'get rid of'
- » Meanwhile, some groups visit the wall of ideas
- » Each group is illustrating their ideas on the floormats

1.30pm Lunch

2.30pm How would you like to remember and honour the children who died in 1916?

- » VIDEO information session on the children who died in 1916
- » The profile of an individual child who died in 1916 is given (on a card) to each child
- » In groups, each child introduces their individual 1916 child
- » Discussion in twos: How would the children who died in 1916 like to be remembered in 100 years?
- » Children record their views on a dedicated floormat and share their ideas with the group

3.20pm Announce results of voting – put their top-voted priorities in the time capsule

Evaluation

3.30pm Close

Appendix 3: Consultation participants

A total of 215 children and young people (96 males and 119 females) aged between eight years and 18 years took part in the consultations.

Participants aged 8–12 years (60 males and 76 females). Each school sent one representative from 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class.

- » 25 May – 48 participants (children aged 8–12 years: 21 males and 27 females)
- » 26 May – 48 participants (children aged 8–12 years: 25 males and 23 females)
- » 21 October – 40 participants (children aged 8–12 years: 14 males and 26 females)

Participants aged 13–18 years (35 males and 43 females) were recruited through Comhairlí na nÓg and other external organisations including Irish Wheelchair Association and EPIC:

- » 30 September – 21 participants (children aged 13–18 years: 11 males and 15 females)
- » 1 October – 36 participants (children aged 13–18 years: 12 males and 19 females)
- » 20 October – 21 participants (children aged 13–18 years: 12 males and 9 females)

Appendix 4: Voting results at each consultation

Vote 'like'		
May 25	May 26	September 30
Ireland is safe from war. (1)	Freedom (1)	Culture and language (1)
Education (availability of) (2)	Equality (2); Green environment with no pollution (2) Joint second place	Irish pride (2)
Fun activities of the GAA	Scenery, sports and music	Gender equality
Tradition and culture: Irish dancing; Gaelic football and hurling; music; language; independent country; organisations that keep Irish alive	Ireland has a good history.	Acceptance – that we accept all races, religions, sexualities, abilities and cultures
We like the clean, fresh air.	Ireland is not an over-industrialised country.	Opportunities for young people
Nature, landscape and animals of Ireland	Ireland is multi-cultural.	People joining and working together for important issues and events
We like that gay people can get married now.	Nature in Ireland	Stable government, a fair democracy
We like that Ireland has its own sport.	Friends	Music – there are positive opportunities in all aspects of music.
History (the history of Ireland)	Music and pets	Irish language in Gaeltacht areas
Democracy and freedom	Ireland – country itself and its people.	Sense of identity and Irish people
Holidays	The rural countryside	
Equality, gay rights, no to racism. People with disabilities are equal with other people.		
October 1	October 20	October 21
Culture and heritage (1)	Our history, culture and heritage (including language, sports, country and traditions) (1)	Irish traditions including culture, music, dancing, sport, language and food (1)
Comhairle na nÓg (2)	Our democracy and the voice of young people (2)	We like the Irish language and want to keep it from dying out. (2)
The land: natural beauty; agriculture; history and historical monument; green grass and open space	In Ireland children are protected by the law.	Animals
Youthwork – youth projects and Comhairle na nÓg	Same-sex marriage	Our history, culture and nature
We are a developed country without losing our language and culture.	Friendly Irish (history, heritage, music and culture)	Our education system
		Clean, unpolluted country
		Tourist attractions – we like the land and farmlands.

Vote 'bin'

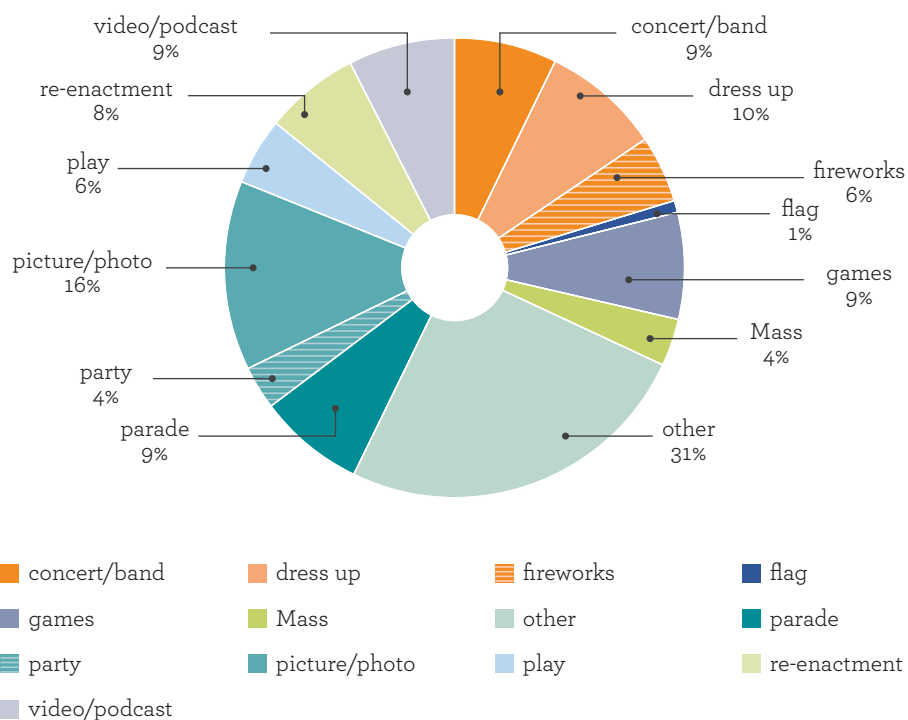
May 25	May 26	September 30
Drugs (1)	Racism and drugs (1)	Leaving Cert and the new points system (1)
Bullying (2); Suicide (2) Joint second place	Stereotypical image of Ireland (2)	Discrimination, inequality, racism, homophobia and xenophobia (2)
We want to get rid of children drinking alcohol under the age of 16	Ban signs on shops that don't allow children under 18 to enter shops.	The current government/ Taoiseach
We want to get rid of smoking.	Get rid of smoking.	Smoking – damage to yourself, damage to the environment
Illegal drugs	Cyberbullying	Ban all costs associated with going to school.
Smoking	Bullying including cyberbullying	Separate governments in NI (a united Ireland)
Boxes giving false information on foods, e.g. no added sugar	Pay inequality between men and women	Points system as a fair representation – look at the whole person – don't have all results based on one exam.
New changes for teachers about using technology	Kidnappers	Drinking culture and underage drinking
Get rid of bullying.	Homework – to allow children more time to play outside	No smoking/underage drinking
Get rid of suicide	Pollution	
Crime, like robbery	Violence	
Drugs		
October 1	October 20	October 21
The hoodie stigma (1)	Points race puts too much pressure on young people. (1)	Drink (alcohol) and drugs (1)
Mental health; lack of services; social media bullying; and negative stigma (2)	End suicide. (2)	Bin cigarettes and toxic waste. (2)
Body issues – people being judged with how they look for issues they can't help	Strict rules on uniforms, hair and jewellery – no individuality allowed by schools	Suicide
People abusing the social welfare	Strong religious people (pushing religion on people)	Scrap homelessness.
Bin bullying.	End the partition of Ireland.	Racism
		Bin bullying.
		Water meters

Vote 'change'

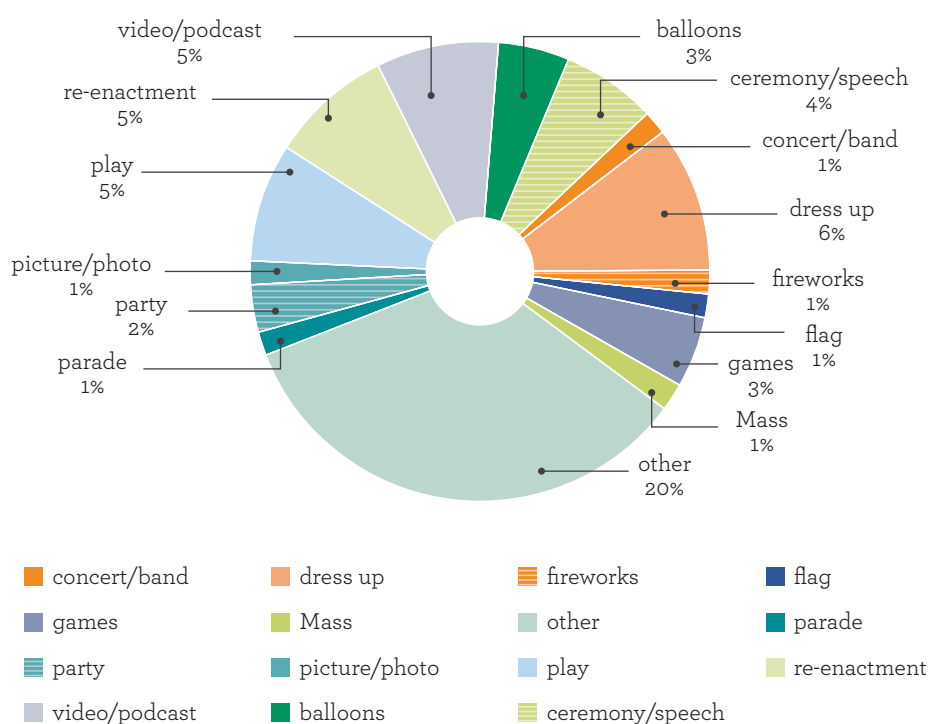
May 25	May 26	September 30
Old, abandoned houses should be fixed up – could be used to help homeless people. (1)	Obesity (1)	Poverty and homelessness (1)
Child abuse (2)	Stop poverty and homelessness by creating more jobs for people with no college education. (2)	Introduce the right to die in Ireland for terminally ill people. (2)
There should be less homelessness in Ireland.	Build more facilities in smaller counties	Student accommodation – more, cheaper, availability, set charge
We want to stop bullying now.	Reduce prices, so more people can afford to buy things.	Education – improvement in the system to create more opportunities in the future
We want to stop cutting down trees.	Children need to be more active.	Rural infrastructure
Deal with homelessness.	Homelessness	Health services
More jobs	Better health and nutrition	The way in which Irish is taught – through Irish not English
More mental health services	Equal rights	Standardised testing – get rid of Leaving Cert and essay-like exams. More multiple choice exams like in the US
Better healthcare	Racism	Improve how Irish is taught and invest in the Gaeltacht areas.
Change the system, so less bullying in school.	Homelessness – more houses	Voting age – change the voting age to 16. Have studied CSPE; understand why; and able to work and leave school. Pay taxes, so should have a vote
Build more houses for poor people.	Sports – more resources to be put into sports	
Bullying	Change bullies into nice people.	
October 1	October 20	October 21
Mental illness to be treated like a physical illness (1)	Educational system in Ireland (1)	Smoking (1)
Rural views (2); The education system (2) Joint second place	Lack of facilities for both physical and mental health (2); Deal with the homeless situation. (2) Joint second place.	Stop racism. (2); Stop bullying. (2) Joint second place
Change negative attitudes towards mental health.	WiFi and broadband needs improvement in rural areas.	Stop bullying.
Supports: more support for people with mental health problems. More support for bigger families	Religion classes in schools should be optional.	Suicide
Adoption laws – less strict adoption laws, more encouragement for people to adopt and foster	Deal with the negative impact of racism and stereotyping.	We want to change homelessness.
Driving lessons at 16, so when young people turn 17 they can immediately take their driving test		Stop racism about the Irish.
On public transport you should be charged as a child until you are 18 years.		Save our peat bogs.
Better disability access		
Better education system, e.g. sex ed, extra-curricular qualifications		
Education system – Leaving Cert points focus on academic. Disability access route to education opportunities		

Appendix 5: Ideas for children and young people's event by consultation

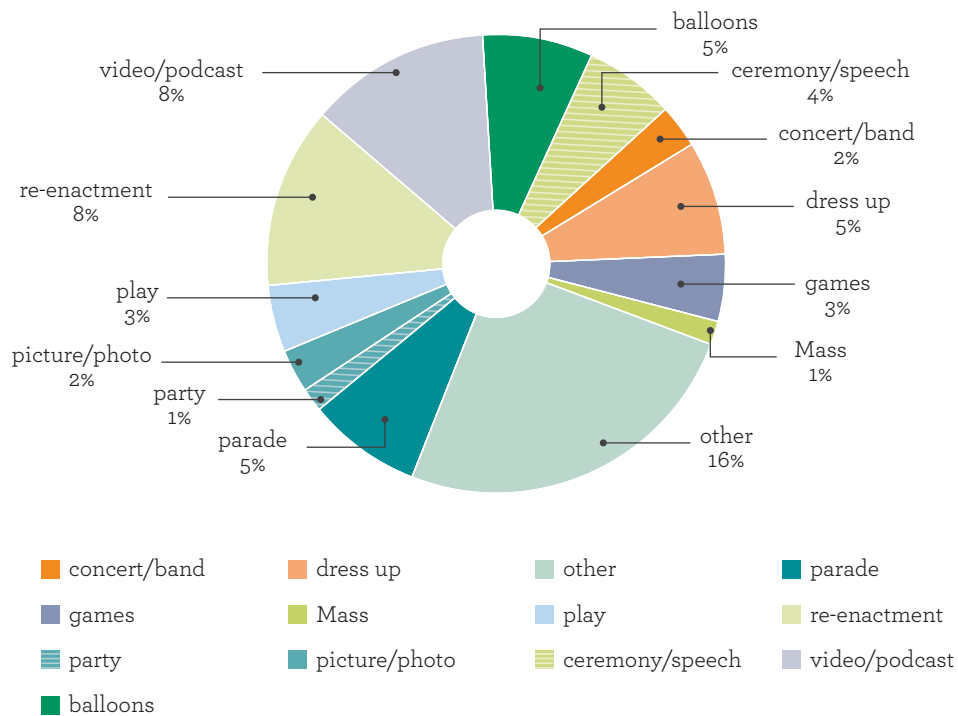
Ireland 2016 – Pilot
Ideas for the day (ages 8–12 years)



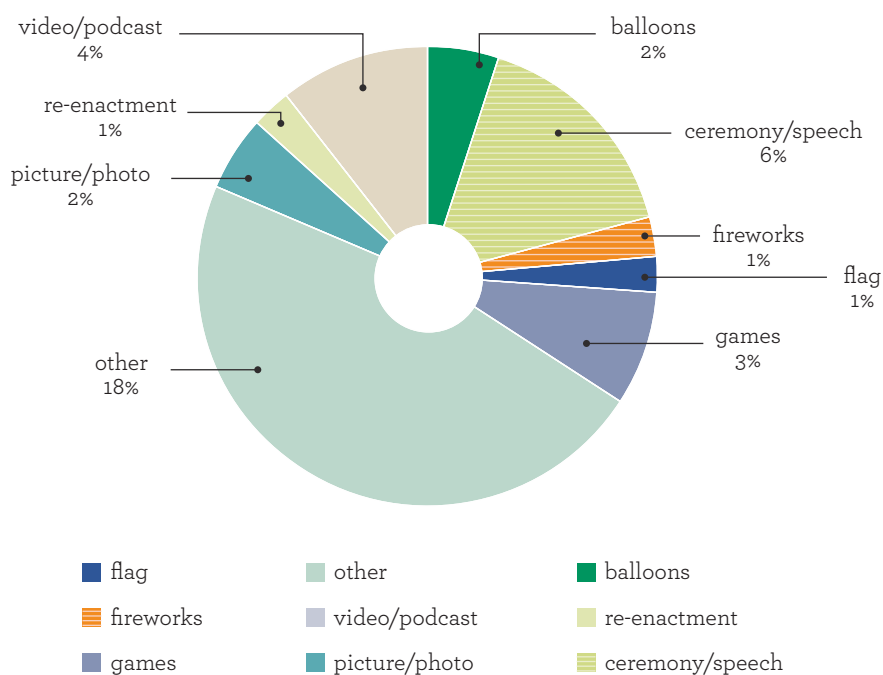
Ireland 2016 Day ideas
30 September (ages 13–17 years)



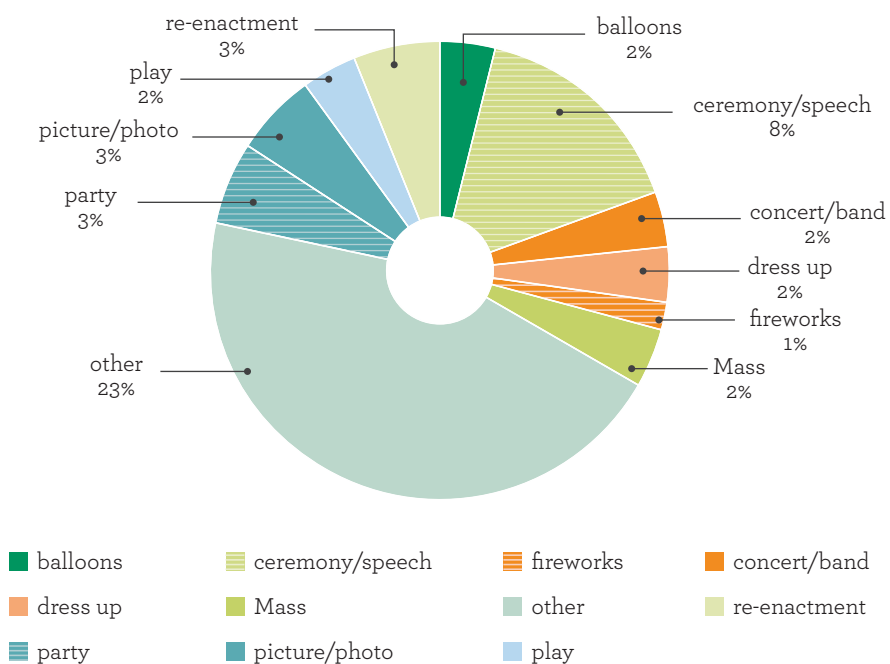
Ireland 2016 Day ideas
1 October (ages 13–17 years)



Ireland 2016 Day ideas
20 October (ages 13–17 years)

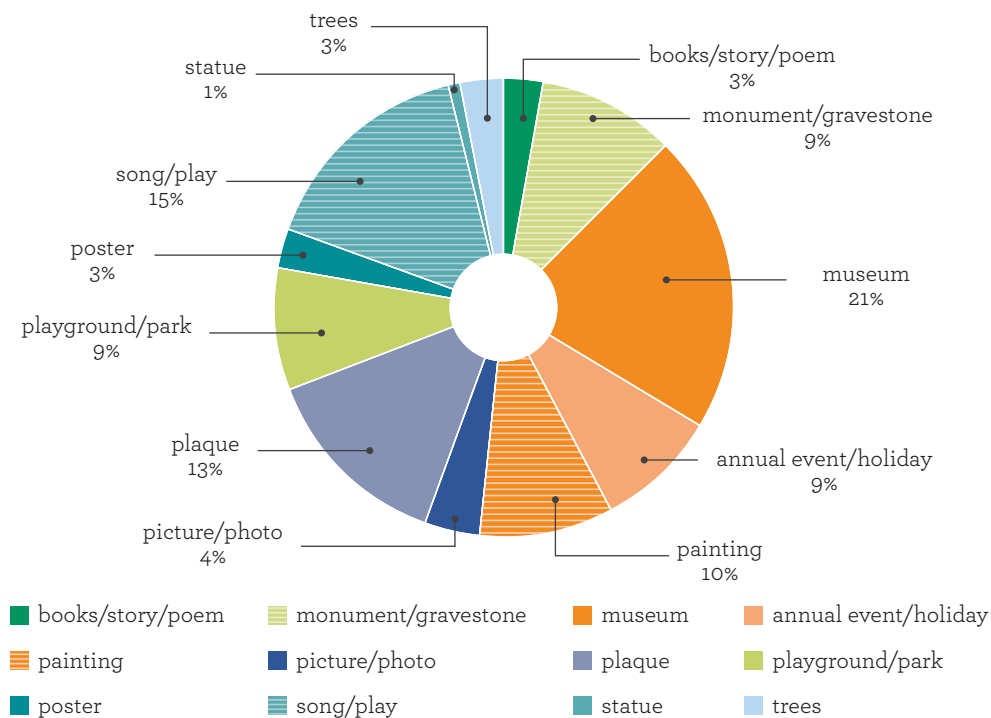


Ireland 2016
Ideas 21 October (ages 8–12 years)



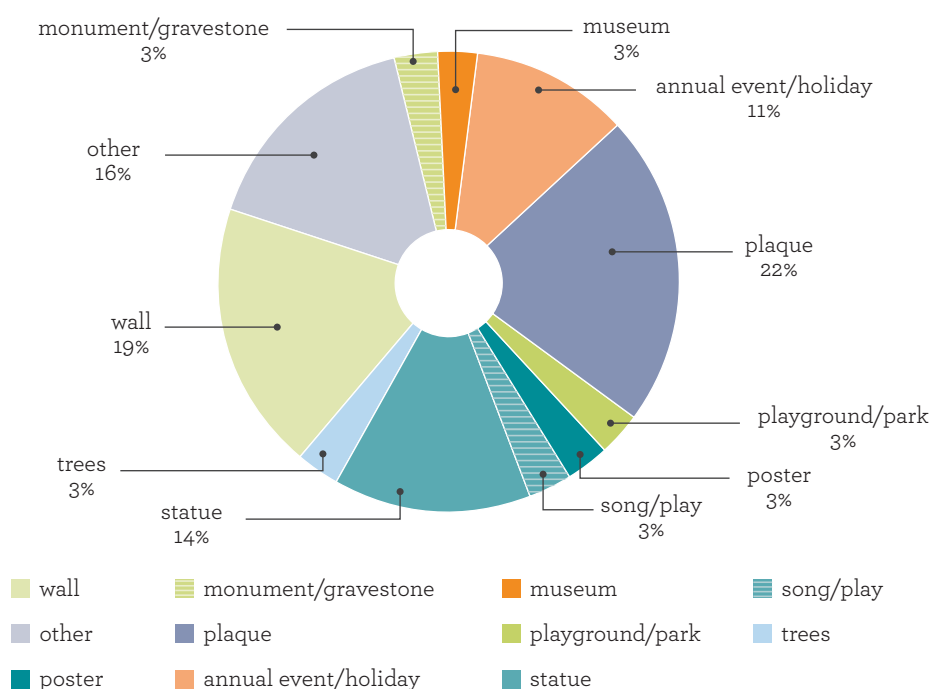
Appendix 6: Ideas for permanent commemoration by consultation

Pilot ideas for permanent commemoration (ages 8–12 years)

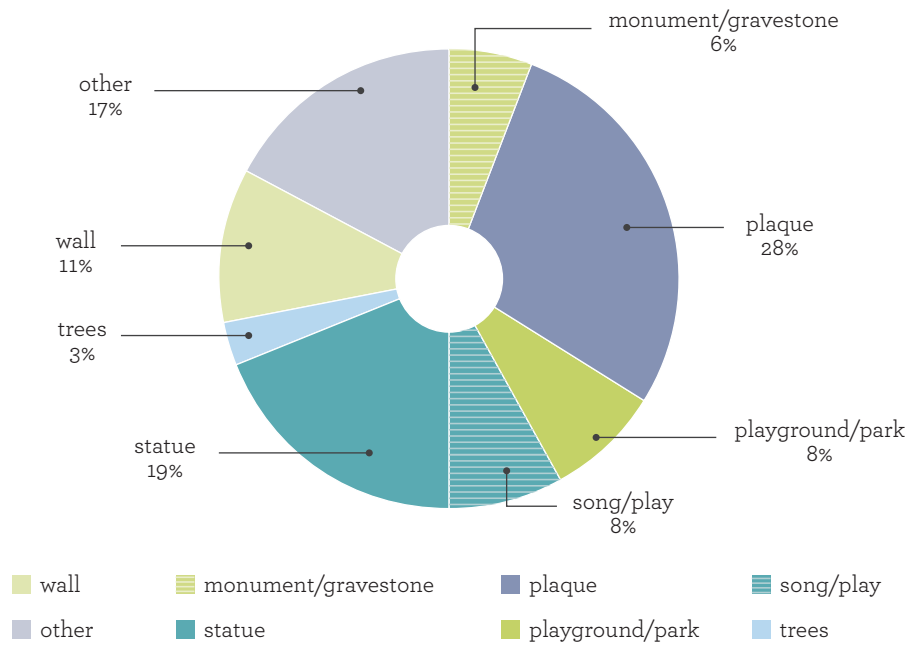


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21 October Ideas for permanent commemoration (8–12 years)

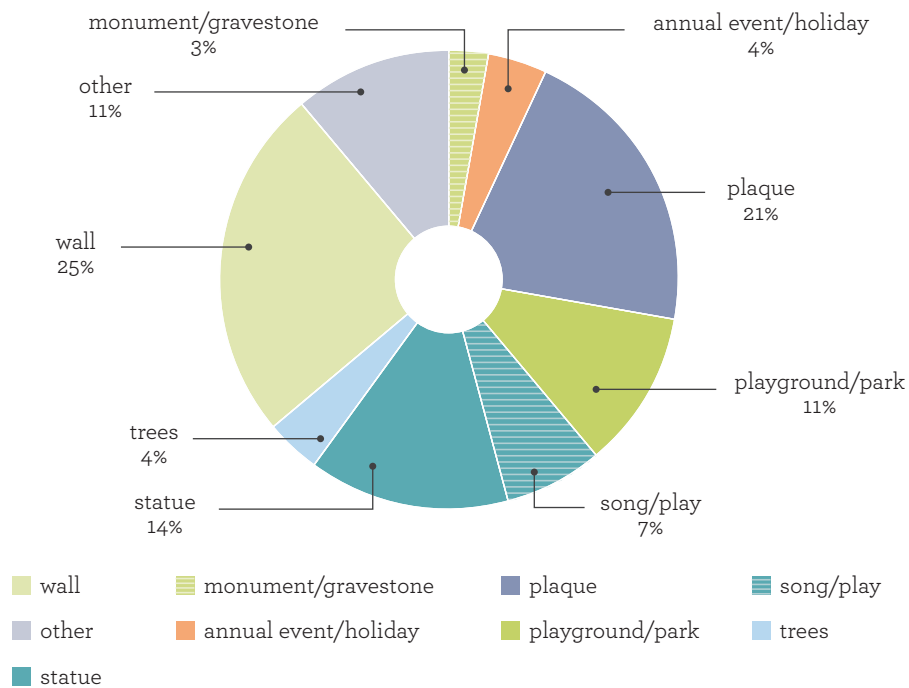


30 September: Ideas for permanent commemoration (ages 13–18 years)

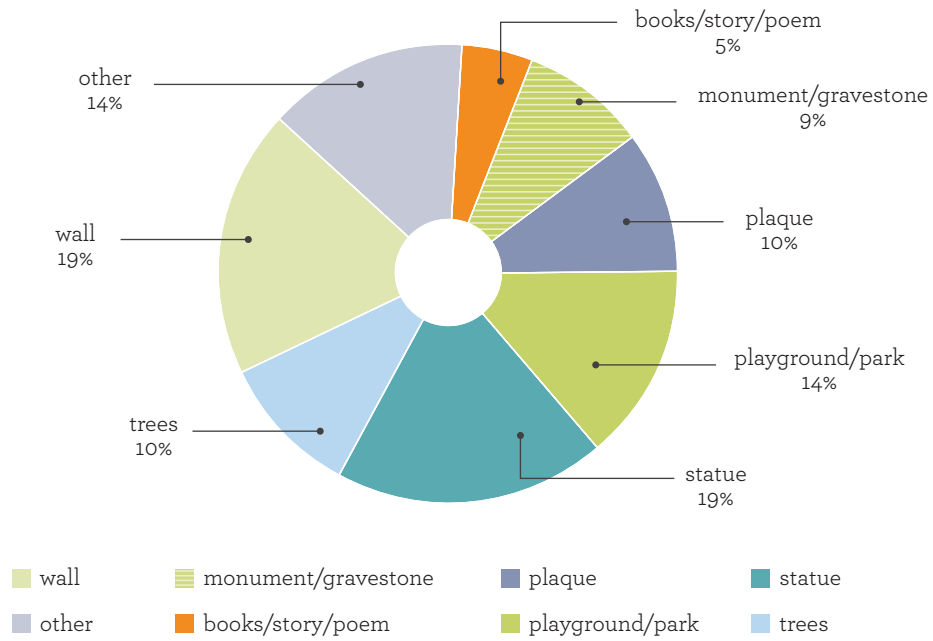


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1 October: Ideas for permanent commemoration (ages 13–18 years)



20 October: Ideas for permanent commemoration (ages 13–18 years)



Appendix 7: Methodology for recording the consultations

Participation can refer to a wide range of processes that seek to elicit and take into account children's views. In order for participation to be effective, it must be child-centred, rights-respecting and non-tokenistic. Elaborating on the obligations associated with Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child set out in detail the conditions which must be met when engaging in participation processes.⁸ Participation processes must be transparent and informative; voluntary; respectful; relevant to the children's lives; child friendly; inclusive; and supported by training. Children must be protected from harm and a commitment to follow up and evaluate consultations with children and young people is crucial.⁹

A number of theoretical models of participation have been developed to explain how approaches may differ in their understanding of what participation is for, what it entails, and what its outcomes might be. Some now well-known models, for example, Hart's Ladder¹⁰ and Treseder's Degrees of Participation¹¹ characterise children's participation as a hierarchy with child-led initiatives viewed as ideal, which has been replaced by a growing acknowledgement that different contexts require different approaches, and different degrees of power-sharing between adults and children.

Graham and Fitzgerald¹² list five characteristics that children and young people themselves identify as central to their participation. These are that participation should:

- » Be respectful
- » Focus on change
- » Include access to information on which to base decisions
- » Acknowledge children's evolving capacities by distinguishing between having a say and having to take full responsibility for decisions
- » Be part of a relational dialogue between themselves and adults.

There is a growing body of evidence that children's participation in shared activities with adults and peers encourages children's development; as Lansdown notes, children come to know and understand their world through their own activities in communication with others.¹³ Involving children in participatory processes helps them to develop new skills and provides new experiences, gives them a sense of belonging in their community and enables them to realise their power as active agents.¹⁴

Ireland's adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1992 has prompted a shift towards a perception of children and young people as rights-holders. Article 12 of the Convention provides for the child's right to be heard in all matters affecting him/her and requires that his/her views be taken into account in accordance with age and maturity. As a result, there is growing evidence that incorporating children's views into decision-making processes results in better data and better outcomes for

⁸ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 12 (2009): The right of the child to be heard*, CRC/C/GC/12, section 134 available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC-C-GC-12.pdf> (accessed: 1/2/2016)

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Hart, *Children's Participation: from tokenism to citizenship* (1992, Florence: UNICEF), p.8.

¹¹ Treseder, *Empowering Children and Young People* (1997) London: Children's Rights Office and Save the Children.

¹² Graham and Fitzgerald (2010) 'Progressing children's participation: Exploring the potential of a dialogical turn' *Childhood* 17 (3): 343-359.

¹³ Lansdown, *Can you hear me? The right of young children to participate in decisions affecting them* The Hague, the Netherlands: The Bernard Van Leer Foundation, 2005 at p. 7.

¹⁴ *Supra* note 1 at p. 136.

children, as well as for the societies in which they live,¹⁵ and DCYA has now been actively involving children in decision-making for well over a decade. Such participation vindicates children's rights under the CRC and reflects the view that children are persons of value with meaningful experiences and opinions which should be taken into account by adults.¹⁶ Indeed, children are now widely recognised as experts in their own lives who can offer unique perspectives based on their own experience. The DCYA Citizen Participation Unit has been central to bringing about this shift in Ireland.

The National Participation Strategy¹⁷ adopts Lundy's model of participation. This model identifies four elements – space, voice, audience and influence – as a prerequisite to effective rights-based participation for children and young people.¹⁸ When all of these conditions are met, children have the opportunity to express their views about matters that affect them and space is opened up for the development of dialogue producing shared meanings that can shape the lives of both children and adults. Elsewhere, Lundy characterises informed consent and voluntary participation as key ethical principles when working with children.¹⁹

The UCC team

In line with Lundy's approach cited above, the UCC team adopted a mixed methodology for reporting on the consultation process comprising desk research, observation, and following the completion of the adult report, a 'pocket' of participatory research with a group of volunteer young researchers.

1. Firstly, the research team reviewed and documented the planning of the consultation methodologies and the consultation process to provide a context for the field research.
2. Secondly, the researchers worked closely with DCYA prior to each consultation and attended each event.
3. Thirdly, field research was conducted using overt participant observation,²⁰ where the researcher is identified and her role as observer is clearly defined. This methodology respects participants' rights as it allows them to know that they are being observed. It also allows the researcher to communicate with participants informally, for example in asking for clarification of a contribution, or more formally, as in conducting the exit interviews.
4. Fourthly, placemats, contributions to the 'wall of ideas' and exit interview materials generated at the events were collected and recorded to inform the preparation of the report.

¹⁵ Graham and Fitzgerald, 'Children's participation in research: Some possibilities and constraints in the current Australian research environment' (2010) 46 *Journal of Sociology* 133-147 at p. 133.

¹⁶ *Ibid* at p. 135.

¹⁷ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020*. Dublin: Government Publications. Available at: www.dcy.ie

¹⁸ Lundy, 'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' *British Educational Research Journal* Vol 33, Issue 6, 2007, 927-942.

¹⁹ Lundy and McEvoy (2012) 'Children's rights and research processes: Assisting children to (in)formed views' *Childhood* Volume 19 (1)16.

²⁰ John D Brewer (2003) 'Observation, overt and covert' in Robert L. Miller & John D. Brewer (eds) *The A-Z of Social Research* (London: Sage) pp. 213-217.

Analysis

Findings from the consultations were separated into two strands:

1. Ideas for commemorating the children who died in 1916
2. Children's views about contemporary Ireland, including the changes they would like to see.

The purpose of the consultations was to capture the views of children and young people on their own terms, using the data and the voting preferences they themselves generated. In addition to presenting the voting outcomes, all 'likes', 'bins' and 'changes' were inputted into a qualitative analysis software package, NVivo, and analysed to generate word clouds which visually represent the frequency with which key issues arose during these sessions. Data relating to ideas for commemorating the children who died in the Rising were analysed using Excel.

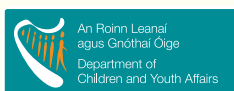
While the report was primarily written by the research team, a group of volunteer young researchers were facilitated to develop an accessible version of the report for dissemination to children and young people in a range of formats (e.g. hard copy report, poster, online), presenting the possibility of the young people creating their own 'pockets of participation' in an otherwise adult-led project.²¹

Outputs

The primary planned output of the project is this report of the consultation process, which includes a description of the planning and development of the consultations and the methodologies used, the findings of the consultations with children and young people about their views on the legacy of 1916 and how to honour the children who died, together with the children and young people's ideas for Ireland's future.

A child and youth-friendly version of the report is also planned to be made available in a range of formats that are accessible to a wide audience.

²¹ Myfanwy Franks, 'Pockets of Participation: Revisiting Child-Centred Participation Research' *Children & Society* 25 (2011): 15–25.



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