

Notes from 1st meeting of 2014-15 CNN National Executive

Saturday 18th January 2014

Attendees at this meeting: 32 out of 34 reps attended

Aaron McGrath, Carlow; Conor McCabe, Cavan; Siobhra Conway, Clare; Shauna Williams, Cork City; Jane Nally-Hayes, Cork Co; Maria Ferry, Donegal; Megan Ní Mhathúna, Dublin City; Dylan Kennedy, South Dublin; Laura Hogan, Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown; Garreth O'Connor, Fingal; Kayleigh Power, Galway City; Daniel Porter, Galway Co; Conor Curtin, Kerry; Cormac O'Loingsigh, Kildare; Irene Ayaa, Kilkenny; Joy Turley, Laois; Ella Mulkerrins, Leitrim; Pearse Mulcahy, Limerick Co; Thomas Ganley, Longford; Shay McArdle, Louth; Rosie Allison, Mayo; Cillian Byrne, Meath; Lily Cheung, Monaghan; Caoimhe Barnes, Offaly; Niki Warner, Roscommon; Nicola Flannelly, Sligo; Bertie Nesirky, Tipperary North; Becky O'Connell, Waterford City; Cárthach O'Faoláin, Waterford County; Niamh Tubridy, Westmeath; Macdara Roche, Wexford, Niamh Whelan, Wicklow



FOCUS OF THE FIRST MEETING:

- Introducing the 32 attending reps to the members of the Participation Team who will be working with them and supporting them for the next two years.
- Group introductions to allow all new members to get to know each other in an informal way.
- Introducing the group to the Mental Health experts who are members of our National Executive Steering Committee
- Introducing two members of our Oireachtas Team of link TDs and senators.
- Review and re-cap of the discussions, outcomes and recommendations from Dáil na nÓg 2013

MORNING SESSION:

Presentation 1: 'Role of the National Executive' by Anne O'Donnell – key points

- How a National Executive member is elected
- What is their role and key areas of responsibility
- Recap of winning recommendation from Dáil na nÓg '***The need for a national mental health gathering for second level students, with music and events to improve attitudes towards mental health***'.
- Important to note that two-way communication is very important as a National Executive rep, i.e.
 - Giving feedback to your Comhairle na nÓg about what you are doing in the National Executive and the progress you are making.
 - Bringing the views of your Comhairle na nÓg to the National Executive
- Tips on how to make the most of your time and how to progress your topic
- Results of final vote from Dáil na nÓg. Winning recommendation – 50%. Other two recommendations – 29% and 21%

Presentation 1: 'Housekeeping, Registration, Travel Expenses and Basic Info' by Karyn Farrell – key points

- General information on the building and on meetings times and venues - **11:30 – 15:30** once a month on a Saturday in Hawkin's House. Occasional Sub-Group meetings in DCYA Offices. Requirement to arrive earlier than **11:20**, where possible, to sign in and register and also to submit your travel expenses forms.
- Info on where to go upon arrival and what to expect each week.
- Availability of food / drink refreshments
- Signing in and registration info. Information on travel reimbursement.
- What happens during the meeting, i.e. actions and decisions recorded by Karyn; notes sent out within days of meeting; photographs taken throughout
- Contact between meetings: the importance of letting us know before the specified date if you are free to attend the next meeting for two reasons:
 1. Catering – need to know numbers to advance to ensure there is enough food
 2. Staffing – need to know numbers to ensure we have enough staff & facilitators on the day.
- How to contact Karyn:
 - Phone or text: 01 8584520 / 086 8498602. Register for web-text if you haven't already.
 - Email: kfarrell@youthworkireland.ie
 - Facebook: Comhairle na nÓg National Executive
 - Twitter: @CNNNatExecutive
- What happens after each meeting? Website updated – www.comhairlenanog.ie with photos. Facebook updated with photos and a short summary of what went on at meeting. Tweets sent out with photos, where possible. Notes on actions and decisions taken to be emailed to all Nat Exec reps and their coordinators.

GROUP CONTRACT –

Drawn up by all members of the National Executive, and Suzanne Byrne and Martin Donohoe, Participation Officers

- Respect
- Co-operation
- Hear what everyone is saying
- No county prejudices
- Inclusion (don't leave anyone out)
- No grudges (talk out differences)
- Punctuality
- One-at-a-time talking
- Don't sit back – take part
- Keep it general for all young people (YPs) – we not I
- Make sure everyone understands. Ask – no such thing as stupid question
- Say what is on your mind
- No mobile phones during meetings
- Open communication – everyone is heard
- Have patience with each other
- Communication is two way – Team keep in touch with YPs & YPs return messages and answer emails
- Be open and flexible to others' opinions
- Offer to help out – don't wait to be asked. Don't leave other people under pressure
- Stay for full duration of all meetings (until 15:30). Cannot leave early without permission from your parents
- Important to feed back to your Comhairle regularly
- Concentrate during meetings
- Some bad jokes are acceptable 😊

AFTERNOON SESSION:

Q&A Session with members of outgoing National Executive 2012 – 2013

Mairéad Coady, Kilkenny; Dmytro Moysoyev, Wicklow and Orin Tulié-Daly, Offaly

DVD of the work and legacy of the outgoing Executive was shown to all highlighting the achievements of their term. Can be viewed on the National Executive page of our website www.comhairlenanog.ie

Q&A:

Some questions asked:

- What was the reaction of the TDs and senators to Your Comhairle Needs You?
Answers: made them take notice. Put us on their radar. Effective – led to Ceann Comhairle meeting. Showed we were serious and important.
- What are the best ways of encouraging TDs and senators to attend our events?
Personal contact is best. Email first, then follow up with phone call and try to arrange a meeting face-to-face where possible.
- What caught their attention about Your Comhairle Needs You?
Catchy, good tagline, we were very well-prepared
- What would be the best ways to promote our event / events based on our recommendation?
Social Media.
- What were the main problems you encountered / what didn't work so well? Why?
Difficulty in progressing local ask. End of term so time was an issue.
- What tips could you offer us to working more efficiently and effectively?
Use your time wisely. Get to know each other and use each other as a resource and source of information. Set up a closed Facebook group to network and chat to each other informally outside meetings.

Introduction to Steering Committee members and two of Oireachtas team

Steering Committee (mental health experts) in attendance:

Gerry Ralaigh, NOSP, National Office for Suicide Prevention; Elaine Geraghty, ReachOut.com & James Barry, Headstrong

Oireachtas Team members present:

Senator Jillian van Turnhout and Aodhán O'Riordáin, TD

Elaine Geraghty, CEO of ReachOut.com:

- Talked about the philosophy of ReachOut.com – helping young people through tough times and demystifying mental health. How interests such as art, music and creativity in general can be a great release and a great help. Important to open up conversations about mental health and things that are good for it – not one size fits all so what works for one person may not work for all.
- Referred to using the Steering Committee as a resource throughout. Quote 'you now have the ears of people who can help you make a difference'.
- Talked about how young people are at the heart of their service and how it is driven by them.
- In relation to the National event/s, focus on promoting the good things in life. Look at what resources are available at present.

James Barry, Youth Engagement Officer, Headstrong

- Talked about Headstrong's mission – to change how Ireland thinks about Young people's mental health.
- Young people are now, in the present. They should not always be talked about as being the Future.
- Young people involved and engaged in all aspects of Headstrong's work and processes.
- Question as to how National Exec can tackle the stigma of mental health issue. Ans: don't use the word stigma. Using the word stigma can add to the stigma. De-stigmatise it by doing positive things. Include all young people in the conversation – we all have mental health.

Sen. Jillian van Turnhout

- Here as a representative of the Oireachtas
- When approaching decision makers, do your research and be realistic about what they can do for you.
- Never be afraid to ask for anything

Gerry Raleigh, Director of NOSP

- Aim of his organisation is to reduce the level of loss of life in this country, as well as incidents of self-harming
- Want to promote positive mental health and to make it easy for people to ask for help, young people in particular.
- Referred to importance of youth mental health organisations such as Headstrong and ReachOut.com - when young people need help, it's there.
- NOSP are working on a new national policy. Aim: for it to be short, focused and concentrated on action. Will consult with a wide variety of people of all ages.
- Looking for something back from the young people – their voice and their views.

Aodhán O'Riordáin, Labour TD for Dublin North Central

- Message to the young people was 'never underestimate how powerful you are. There are no boundaries to your capacity for magnificence'.
- When approaching decision makers for help – what is important is the power of your argument, how well-researched it is and that it is obvious that you believe what you are saying.
- Has great belief in what can happen in a small room with a small group of people – great things and great change can happen.
- Q: how can you, as Oireachtas members, increase our influence and help us to progress our recommendation? Ans: you have a great connection here between us and the relevant decision makers. TDs and senators can help by talking about their own struggles and be more honest about times when they felt low. We all have our own struggles and weaknesses. It helps if those in power are also not afraid to say that they sometimes don't feel okay.

SAVE THE DATE

NEXT MEETING:

SAT. 22ND FEBRUARY 2014 – 11:30 – 15:30

HAWKIN'S HOUSE, HAWKIN'S ST, DUBLIN 2