

A Report of the Workshop Discussions at Dáil na nÓg 2017



March 2018

Introduction

About this report

This report documents the findings of the workshop discussions at Dáil na nÓg 2017 which took place on the 6th of December 2017 in Croke Park, Dublin.

Background

Dáil na nÓg is the national youth parliament for 12 - 17-year-olds. It is a biennial event, to which 200 representatives from 31 local Comhairle na nÓg are elected as delegates. The DCYA funds and oversees Dáil na nÓg, which is hosted by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Both the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration and officials from their respective Departments attended Dáil na nÓg 2017.

The theme and topics discussed at Dáil na nÓg are chosen in advance by Comhairle members nationwide. The theme for Dáil na nÓg 2017 was 'Equality'. This was the majority vote by 325 Comhairle members from 21 Comhairlí from all over the country on the four proposed themes - the others were Young People and Civic Engagement, Healthy Lifestyle and Transport, in second, third and fourth places respectively. The four themes were selected by the young people on the Dáil na nÓg Steering Committee. They came up with four overarching suggestions based on the current topics being worked on by the 31 Comhairlí. These suggestions were put to a vote nationwide by Comhairle members and the winning theme was overwhelmingly 'Equality'.

Following on from this, the methodology used at Dáil na nÓg was designed by a group of young people from the Dáil na nÓg Steering Committee. The young people came together in DCYA in August 2017 to develop the approach to be taken on the day. Through a series of workshop activities, the group developed and tested the methodology. The group decided that the methodology should be delivered by young people with the assistance of adult facilitators. In preparation for the day, a briefing session was held for the young facilitators and their adult co-facilitators. The briefing session was a further testing of the methodology. Feedback on the day prompted the development of information sheets on the settings being discussed. These information sheets were distributed to delegates in advance of the event. There were also guiding questions developed to aid facilitators on the day.

Members of the Dáil na nÓg Steering Committee were also asked to brainstorm young people's experiences of equality in relation to the setting in which they live. They came up with five settings, which provided delegates with the five areas for discussion at the tables on the day.

All delegates had an opportunity to contribute to discussions on all of the below settings:

- School
- Home and community
- Online
- Public services
- Sport and leisure

The recommendations from Dáil na nÓg form the basis of the work of the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive over the following two years. The incoming Comhairle na nÓg National Executive will work with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to effect change or improvement on the top issue identified at Dáil na nÓg. The Comhairle na nÓg National Executive is comprised of one young representative from each of the 31 Comhairlí na nÓg. The National Executive has a term of office of two years, meets once a month and is facilitated and supported by officials from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs including the DCYA Participation Team. DCYA ensure that the young people elected to the National Executive get the opportunity to engage with appropriate Ministers, policy-makers, Oireachtas Committees and other statutory and non-statutory decision-makers.

About the young people

In total, 212 delegates from all 31 Comhairle na nÓg attended Dáil na nÓg 2017. Of these, 122 (57.5%) were female and 90 (42.5%) were male.

Consultation methodology

The methodologies for the Dáil na nÓg workshops were designed by the DCYA Participation Support Team. Placemats relating to each of the topics (School, Home/Community, Online, Public Services, Sport/Leisure) were assigned to the tables of young people. The placemats had the following questions:

- *What are the equality issues in this place?*
- *What needs to be done to improve equality in this place?*

The consultation used a ‘world café’ methodology which involved young people discussing the theme of equality under each of the five settings. They used the placemats to write their ideas and suggestions in relation to the two questions. Delegates were allocated twenty minutes to discuss the first setting in detail, before moving on the next setting at a different table for ten minutes. Delegates moved four times in total. At each new table the young people had the opportunity to read what the previous group had written and to add any new points they thought were important.

There were 21 round tables (including one Irish-speaking table) with approximately 10 young people at each table. Each discussion group was facilitated by young people from the outgoing Comhairle na nÓg National Executive and co-facilitated by an accompanying adult. As was mentioned previously, a briefing session was held for the young facilitators and their adult co-facilitators in order to prepare for the day.

After lunch, delegates returned to their original table to vote by sticky-dot on the two questions. They were given six sticky dots (three per question) to prioritise what they thought were the top three issues and the top three suggestions in relation to this question.

At the end of the workshop discussions, Dáil na nÓg delegates had the opportunity to vote on the five settings and to choose their top setting in which young people experience equality and inequality. Votes took place by private ballot. The setting which received the most votes will form the basis of the work of the incoming Comhairle na nÓg National Executive 2018-19.

Voting Results

A total of 212 young people voted, and the setting which received the most votes was school, followed by public services, sports and leisure, home and community and online:

1. School- 78 votes (36.8%)
2. Public services- 65 votes (30.7%)
3. Sport and leisure- 27 votes (12.7%)
4. Home and community- 22 votes (10.4%)
5. Online- 20 votes (9.4%)

Questions and Answers Session

Each table of young people at Dáil na nÓg also prepared questions which they asked at a Questions and Answers session which took place with a panel of experts in the area of equality. The Questions and Answers session was chaired by Dr Fergal Lynch, Secretary General, Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the panel included:

- David Stanton, Minister of State for Equality, Immigration & Integration
- Carol Baxter, Assistant Secretary, Head of Asylum Services, Integration & Equality, Department of Justice and Equality
- Tanya Ward, CEO, Children's Rights Alliance
- Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children

Questions asked included:

Equality in schools

- Is there currently adequate training for teachers on relationships, sexual education and sexual orientation with regards to young people?

- Dr Niall Muldoon, what is your comment on the lack of confidential, non-partisan, qualified counsellors in schools, that are not members of the teaching panel?
- Almost all the people at our table felt that uniforms were limiting their creativity and self-expression so why do you think uniforms are so important to the school system and are they necessary?
- If society is so for equality, why isn't that being taught for example within subjects in the place in which we learn in this day and age?
- How do you see the impact of religion on equality within the school system?

Equality in public transport

- The issue that consistently came up at our table was transport- transport for people with disabilities and transport in rural areas. We feel like not enough is being done in these areas. What do you think should be done to improve these areas?
- Why are 15, 16 and 17-year olds charged an adult or student rate on public transport, even though they are children by law and so should be charged a children's fare?
- An adult in relation to transport is 16, you can leave school at 16, you can drive at 17 but you can't vote until you are 18 and the age of an adult is 18. Why is there no clarity on this?
- There is currently a lack of availability of a student card for second-level students, and therefore they must pay for full-price transport tickets. Would it be possible to create a National Second-Level Student Card that could be issued to all students in first year and recognised by all public transport services?

Equality online

- What would you do to make social media companies more responsible for bullying and anti-social behaviour that occurs on their websites?
- Have you any plans about enforcing the punishment for cyberbullying and behavioural misconduct online and how can the child's rights be protected?

Equality in sport

- It's clear to everyone that there is a difference in how men and women are treated in sport. There is more of an emphasis on men's sport. How can we level the playing field for both genders?

- There is a general consensus that there is inequality for women in sport and men in the arts. Considering the prevalence of this issue, why has it not been addressed?

Government policies on equality

- What policies are the government bringing in to promote equality?
- What actions would, or will you take to aid in the promotion of equality in the home, the community and elsewhere, and why would you take these actions in particular?
- Do you think there is equal punishment between men and women and people under 18 if they have committed the same crime?

Lowering the voting age

- What's restricting the government from lowering the voting age? Are the government committed to lowering it?

Forums for young people

- Other than Comhairle na nÓg, is there a more direct forum that could be implemented or developed to ensure all young people in Ireland have a say in government decisions, as we cannot vote until we are 18 years?

Direct provision

- Do you think living in Direct Provision is fair on young people? If not, what do you plan on doing to change this?

Gender stereotyping

- "Boys are not allowed to cry." How do we address stereotyping of boys being tough and girls being delicate?

Theme 1: School

Key equality issues in school

The key equality issues in school, from the most to the least commonly mentioned, were:

1. Unequal treatment of students by teachers
2. School uniform and appearance issues
3. Gender inequality in subject choices
4. LGBTI equality issues
5. Issues related to curriculum
6. Religious equality issues
7. Irish language equality issues

1. Unequal treatment of students by teachers

The most commonly identified equality issue in schools was unequal and unfair treatment of students by teachers. This included some teachers showing favouritism towards certain students e.g. unequal enforcement of rules and discipline, teachers not respecting students, stereotyping students, not being honest with students, ignoring students, bullying students and “abusing their power”. Young people felt the relationship between teachers and students was unequal, too formal and strict and if they stand up for themselves against teachers it is perceived as “talking back.”

➤ *“Teachers being biased, having favourites and stereotyping students.”*

➤ *“Rules not being enforced equally... if students trying to stand up for yourself it will be taken as talking back.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality related to unequal treatment of students by teachers:

- Continuous training for teachers on teaching methods, social issues affecting young people, equal treatment of students etc.
- Students should have a voice in the classroom and more freedom to express themselves without getting in trouble
- Better regulation of teachers
- The relationship between teachers and students should be less formal to encourage young people to be open and get help if needed

2. School uniform and appearance issues

The second most commonly mentioned equality issue in schools was school uniforms and the appearance issues. For example, participants felt it was unfair that girls in some schools must wear skirts as part of their uniform and are not allowed wear trousers. Similarly, young people thought boys should be allowed wear skirts if they wish. The cost of school uniforms, which can be very expensive, was also discussed as an equality issue for those who cannot afford them. In relation to appearance issues, participants felt students should not be treated unequally, discriminated against or get in trouble in school because of their appearance, e.g. piercings, jewellery, hair length, tattoos, make-up, nail polish etc. Young people thought students should have more freedom, be allowed to express themselves and embrace their individuality and diversity through their appearance.

➤ *“Girls not allowed wear pants, boys not allowed wear skirts- gendered clothing.”*

➤ *“Cannot discriminate based on appearance, same legislation for students and adults.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality related to school uniforms and appearance issues:

- Change school policies around uniforms, e.g. girls allowed to wear trousers etc.

- Change school policies around appearance, e.g. piercings, jewellery, hair length, tattoos, make-up, nail polish etc.
- More gender fluid uniforms
- Allow for student's individuality, diversity and difference

3. Gender inequality in subject choices

The next most frequently highlighted equality issue in schools was gender inequality in subject choices. In many schools, subject choices are often available based on gender. For example, subjects such as metal work and woodwork are traditionally viewed as 'male' subjects and are often not available as subject choices in girl's schools. Similarly, subjects like Home Economics are traditionally viewed as 'female' subjects and are often not available in boy's schools.

- *"Different subject standards between boys and girl's schools, e.g. girl schools having no metal work and boy's schools not having home economics."*
- *"Subject choices are available depending on gender."*

What needs to be done to improve gender equality in subject choices:

- All subjects should be available to all students in all schools
- There should be no gender stereotyping related to subject choices
- More mixed gender schools

4. LGBTI equality issues

The next most identified equality issue in schools was LGBTI equality issues. The main equality issue highlighted for LGBTI students in schools related to sex education. According to participants, sex education

in schools is based on heterosexuality and does not include education on homosexuality, bisexuality, transgender sexuality, intersex sexuality etc. This is often due to the religious ethos of schools. It was also suggested that some schools are prejudiced against LGBTI students.

➤ *“Lack of sex education for those who are LGBT.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in relation to LGBTI equality issues:

- Sex education in schools should be inclusive of all sexual orientations, e.g. heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, transgender sexuality, intersex sexuality etc.
- Sex education should be mandatory in all schools
- Sex education should not be taught based on a particular religious ethos, e.g. Catholic ethos
- Students and teachers should be educated on LGBTI terminology

5. Issues related to the education system and curriculum

Issues related to the education system and curriculum were the next most highlighted equality issue in schools. Some participants felt the current education system and curriculum were unequal, for example, due to the points based exam system, teaching methods lack of life skills in the curriculum.

➤ *“Life skills courses needed in schools. Teach about taxes mortgages etc.”*

What needs to be done to improve issue related to the education system and curriculum:

- Teach more life skills in schools, e.g. taxes, mortgages etc.
- Have set days for homework in different subjects
- More focus on oral work in languages

- Less exams in the Junior and Leaving Cert, e.g. one day per day

6. Religious equality issues

Issues related to religious equality in schools was the next most discussed issue. This mainly related to religious run schools, e.g. Catholic schools, not accommodating non-Catholic/Christian students. For example, mandatory religion classes in schools and students not allowed to wear non-Christian jewellery or clothing, e.g. hijabs. Instances of islamophobia were also reported in some schools.

➤ *“Some schools are not designed for non-Christians.”*

What needs to be done to improve religious equality issues:

- Schools should be non-denominational
- Students should learn about all religions in schools
- Students should not be forced to attend religious ceremonies in schools, e.g. attend mass

7. Irish language equality issues

The next most commonly identified issue was Irish language equality issues in Gaelscoileanna (Irish speaking schools). The main issue highlighted here was the lack of text books in the Irish language which can make it more difficult for students learning through the medium of Irish.

How to improve Irish language equality issues

- More text books in Irish

Other equality issues in schools

Other equality issues in schools, from the most to the least commonly mentioned, are listed below:

Equality Issue	How to improve equality related to this issue
Gender inequality in sport in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More choices for sports for girls and boys • Keep girls motivated and involved in sports • Equal time/resources etc. for girls and boy's teams in schools
Racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach tolerance of different cultures and ethnicities in schools • Zero tolerance policy for racism in schools, e.g. expulsion
Lack of mental health supports , e.g. no Counsellors in schools, mental health not take seriously by teachers/schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Counsellors in schools • Mental health services, e.g. Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services (CAMHS), coming into schools
Unequal funding/facilities among schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More funding for schools, facilities etc. • Improve school buildings and facilities • Build new schools according to population projects of children and young people
Inequality in sports/extra-curricular activities , e.g. GAA gets priority over other sports and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal focus on sports and the arts etc. in schools • Promote other extra-curricular activities in schools, e.g. Comhairle na nÓg • Alternative sports to GAA in schools
Bullying , e.g. teachers 'turning a blind eye' to bullies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up buddy systems in schools

<p>Unequal access to learning supports, e.g. those with learning difficulties, English is not their first language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal access to learning supports • Extra resources and supports for students whom English is not their first language
<p>Inequality for students with disabilities and behavioural issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More training for teachers on the needs and requirements of students with disabilities/behavioural issues and how to teach and treat them • Equal treatment of those with behavioural issues in schools • More facilities for students with disabilities
<p>Unequal access to transport, e.g. school buses in rural areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More school buses in rural areas
<p>Lack of Student Councils in schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Council to be mandatory in all schools • More funding for student councils • Give more power to Student Councils, e.g. representative on Board of Management of schools • Fair elections for Student Councils, e.g. anonymous written interviews
<p>No Transition Year (TY) in some schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TY should be available in all schools

Theme 2: Public Services

Key equality issues in public services

The key equality issues in public services, from the most to the least commonly mentioned, were:

1. Public transport
2. Health services
3. Education system
4. Disability and access issues
5. Public spaces for young people
6. Lowering the voting age

1. Public transport

Public transport was by far the most identified equality issue related to public services. The key equality issues highlighted were lack of adequate public transport services in rural areas, the high cost of public transport, young people paying adult fares at 16 years of age and lack of disability access to public transport.

- *“Rural areas are not getting adequate public transport compared to people living in towns/larger cities even though you have to travel further for most things e.g. school/shopping.”*
- *“Cost of transport buses are too expensive for young people.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in public transport:

- More public transport in rural areas
- Local link services to provide transport to young people in rural areas
- Reduce the cost of public transport

- Increase adult fares from 16 to 18 years
- Ensure public transport is accessible to people with disabilities
- Develop more cycle lanes and footpaths in rural areas

2. Health services

The next most frequently identified area of inequality in public services was health services. The key equality issues raised by participants were the cost of healthcare, lack of mental health services particularly in rural areas, long waiting lists to access health services, lack of access to hospitals and ambulance services in rural areas, badly run health services and lack of training among healthcare professionals on LGBTI health issues.

- *“Hospitals, especially for children and young people are focused in Dublin even though families may live far away.”*
- *“Waiting list too long for health services.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in health services:

- Free healthcare for all
- More staff in health services to reduce waiting lists
- Improve emergency health services
- Build more hospitals
- Psychologists clinics in local GPs
- More mental health services for Travellers
- More Counsellors in schools for all students

- More ambulance services in rural areas
- Train volunteers to support ambulance services, similar to the Garda Reserve
- More health promotion aimed at young people
- Develop colour coded cards for people with medical conditions

3. Education system

Equality issues in the education system were the next most commonly mentioned area. The key equality issue in the education system was the role of religion in schools in Ireland. Young people felt faith based schools created inequality for students who are not religious as they must study religion and participate in religious ceremonies, prayers etc., even though they are not religious. Other equality issues raised included lack of Guidance Counsellors in schools, lack of subject choices due to gender stereotyping, e.g. male and female subject choices, gender inequality in sports for girls and inequality issues related to the current curriculum.

- *“Catholic schools- In my school religion is compulsory, prayers are said every morning but not everyone is religious.”*
- *“There is a lack of Guidance Counsellors in schools.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in relation to education:

- Non-denominational education system
- Introduce life skills into the education system, e.g. driver theory test, learn to drive
- Consult with young people on how to improve the education system, e.g. Junior cycle exams

4. Disability and access issues

The next most commonly identified equality issue in public services related to disability and access. According to young people, there is a lack of adequate services for those with disabilities as well as problems with accessibility for those with disabilities to public services such as healthcare, public transport, public spaces and buildings and welfare services.

- *“Disability services needed to be fixed and improved as soon as there is a problem.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in relation to disability services:

- More services for those with disabilities
- Public spaces and buildings should be accessible to those with disabilities
- Public transport should be accessible to those with disabilities
- Access to welfare services should be easier for those with disabilities

5. Public spaces for young people

Lack of public spaces for young people was the next most frequently discussed equality issue. According to participants, there are no safe public spaces for young people to hang out or participate in activities in both urban and rural areas. Some young people said they were not allowed to use their local library due to other young people making noise. Lack of spaces for LGBTI young people was also mentioned.

What needs to be done to improve equality in relation to public spaces for young people:

- More public spaces for young people to hang out, e.g. youth cafes

Other equality issues in public services

Other equality issues related to public services, from the most to the least commonly mentioned are outlined below.

Equality Issue	How to improve equality related to this issue
Voting age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lower the voting age to 16 years
No identity cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce an identity card for young people
Lack of LGBTI support groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More LGBTI support groups
Issues related to the police service , e.g. abuse of power, stereotyping, lack of services in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gardaí should stop stereotyping young people, e.g. those wearing hoodies• More police services in rural areas
Utility services in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate sewage systems in rural areas
Gender neutral public toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More gender neutral public toilets

Theme 3: Sport and leisure

Key equality issues in sport and leisure

The most to the least commonly mentioned equality issues in sport and leisure were:

1. Gender inequality in sport
2. Inequality between different sports and leisure activities
3. Lack of leisure facilities and activities for young people
4. Discrimination/stereotyping against young people
5. LGBT equality issues
6. Gender stereotyping in sport and leisure
7. Unequal access to sport and leisure in rural areas

1. Gender inequality in sport

The most commonly identified equality issue in sport and leisure was gender inequality in sport. This included inequality in funding, facilities, recognition, treatment, sponsorship, media coverage and support for female sports compared with male sports. Schools were singled out as places where there is considerable gender inequality in sport. For example, girls' sports teams not getting the same recognition as boys' teams, boys teams getting priority over pitches for training, having trainers for boys teams but not for girls teams and girls not being allowed to play certain sports in schools as they are considered to be "male sports". Sports clubs, e.g. GAA and soccer clubs, were also highlighted as places where there can be gender inequality. For instance, male teams getting priority over female teams to use pitches and changing facilities, lack of funding for female teams and some clubs not including women.

➤ *"Female sports hold less importance in schools."*

➤ *"No girls team in my school due to no trainer but there is various boy's teams with trainers."*

- *“Lack of changing rooms and facilities in sport- they usually let boys use them over girls in GAA clubs.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in relation to gender inequality in sport:

- More funding for female sports
- Equal recognition, treatment and promotion of male and female sports in schools
- Promote equality in sport
- Keep sport gender neutral, e.g. ‘Rugby World Cup’ rather than ‘Women’s Rugby World Cup’
- Equal wages for male and female sports players
- Mix genders in sports teams, e.g. boys and girls playing together up to 12 years
- More publicity and coverage of female sports in the media
- Encourage more female coaches/referees in sport

2. Inequality between different sports and leisure activities

The next most frequently mentioned equality issue was inequality between different sports and leisure activities. According to young people, there is an inequality in funding, recognition, emphasis and coverage in the media between sports and other leisure activities such as arts based activities, e.g. music, art and dance. Young people felt this was the case in schools and society in general. Participants also suggested that mainstream sports, namely GAA, receive priority over other minority sports in schools, communities, society and the media.

- *“More emphasis on sports than on leisure activities like arts and music, no money for arts only sport.”*

- *“There is a lot more emphasis on GAA sports rather than other sports.”*

What needs to be done to improve inequality between different sports/leisure activities:

- Equal funding for sports and leisure activities
- Equal media coverage of different sports
- Equal promotion of all sports and leisure activities

3. Lack of leisure facilities and activities for young people

The next most commonly discussed equality issue was a lack of leisure facilities and activities for young people, e.g. youth clubs, places to hang out, leisure centres. Participants highlighted the lack of available leisure facilities and activities for older teenagers in particular. Many young people felt there were no places for older teenagers to go apart from pubs and night clubs which are not suitable for this age group. Young people who are not interested in sport were also singled out as having less access to leisure facilities and activities.

- *“No places for 16 or 17-year olds to go apart from pub/night clubs which isn’t legal or safe a lot of the time.”*

What needs to be done to improve inequality in lack of leisure facilities/activities for young people:

- More facilities for young people, e.g. youth clubs, youth cafes, hang out areas in shops etc.
- More activities for young people, e.g. discos for older teenagers, outdoor cinemas, family events
- More free/cheap activities for young people

4. Discrimination/stereotyping against young people

The next most frequently mentioned equality issue was discrimination and stereotyping against young people in their leisure time. This included young people being discriminated against or treated unfairly, for example in shops and when they socialise. Young people talked about being profiled in shops by

security guards because of their age and being perceived as “troublemakers” or “lazy” due to age based stereotyping.

- *“When you walk into a shop, a security man would follow you all over the shop. Teens are treated differently.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in discrimination/stereotyping against young people:

- Less discrimination and stereotyping of young people

5. Gender stereotyping in sport and the arts

The next equality issue highlighted was gender stereotyping in sports and the arts. Young people felt some sports were considered to be male sports and others female sports. For example, Gaelic football is often judged to be a male sport and females who play are subject to stereotyping. Similarly, the arts are considered to be more female orientated and males who like certain types of arts based activities, e.g. musical theatre and drama, are often stereotyped or “labelled as gay”.

- *“Gender inequality, boys labelled as gay for liking musical theatre.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in gender stereotyping in sports and the arts:

- Less stereotyping in sports and leisure
- Support girls to play more sports
- Support boys to participate more in the arts
- Change public perceptions about female athletes, e.g. female athletes promoting sport

6. LGBTI equality issues

LGBTI equality issues were the next most commonly mentioned equality issue related in sports and leisure. Equality issues for LGBTI people identified included stereotyping of LGBTI people in sport e.g. female participation in certain sports, lack of leisure facilities and activities for LGBTI young people e.g. discos, and transgendered young people being allowed play for male/female sports teams.

- *“Lack of leisure facilities for LGBTQ+ members i.e. LGBTQ+ teenage discos.”*

What needs to be done to improve LGBT equality issues:

- More leisure facilities and activities for LGBT young people
- Promote a more inclusive attitude towards LGBTI people in local communities and society
- Encourage more communication between older and younger generations about LGBT issues

Other equality issues in sport and leisure

Other equality issues in sport and leisure, from the most to the least commonly mentioned, are outlined below:

Equality Issue	How to improve equality related to this issue
Lack of TV, films, books in the Irish language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More funding for Irish language TV programmes, films and books
Access to sport and leisure in rural areas, e.g. lack of alternatives to sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More sports/leisure facilities/activities in rural areas • Affordable and frequent public transport in rural areas to access sports/leisure facilities/activities • More alternative to sport in rural areas • Share resources between rural areas, e.g. physio
Cost of sport and leisure, e.g. gym membership, sports equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheaper sport and leisure activities
Religious clothing and sport, e.g. Muslim girls removing hijab for PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow religious clothing in sport
Lack of variety of sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and raise awareness among young people of different sports • A wider variety of sports facilities/activities, e.g. ice skating, synchronised swimming etc.
Favouritism and sport, e.g. people who play sport are treated differently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No favouritism for people who play sports, e.g. by teachers in school
Body image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normalise different body images among males and females

Sexual harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Call out' sexual harassment
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Theme 4: Home and Community

Equality issues in the home and community

The most to the least commonly mentioned equality issues in the home and community were:

1. Stereotyping, ageism and discrimination against young people
2. Gender based inequality and stereotyping
3. Housing and homelessness
4. LGBTI+ equality issues
5. Equality issues for ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers

1. Stereotyping, ageism and discrimination against young people

The most commonly identified equality issue in the home and community was stereotyping, ageism and discrimination against young people. Young people discussed being discriminated against because of their age when trying to get jobs as well as in shops and restaurants. Participants felt young people are unfairly perceived as “irresponsible and immature” by older generations. Young people also stated that voicing their opinions is often perceived to be “back talking.”

➤ *“Stereotyping the younger generation as irresponsible and immature is ageism.”*

➤ *“Teens not going jobs because of their age.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in stereotyping, ageism and discrimination against young people:

- Educate people about age stereotyping
- Policies banning retailers from intentionally driving away young people
- Involve young people in the development of new activity ideas in their local areas
- Develop online websites aimed at helping young people find jobs
- Parents to trust and support young people more

2. Equality issues in rural areas

The next most commonly identified issue related to equality in the home and community was equality in rural areas. This included lack of services such as ambulance and public transports, lack of infrastructure such as footpaths and lack of recreational facilities for young people, e.g. gyms.

➤ *“Lack of facilities in rural areas not able to partake in certain activities due to not being available.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in rural areas:

- More funding to build facilities for young people in rural areas
- More funding for increase ambulance services in rural areas
- Build more footpaths in rural areas

3. Gender based inequality and stereotyping

The next most frequently mentioned equality issue in the home and community was gender based inequality and stereotyping. This included unequal treatment of girls/women based on their gender in the areas of sport, schools, community and the home, e.g. household jobs. Participants talked about girls being stereotyped as “delicate” and boys as “tough” and there being different standards for the two genders. Sports such as the GAA were perceived as male dominated and schools often allowed girls to only play certain sports based on their gender.

➤ *“Sports and community are more male focused, e.g. GAA.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in gender based inequality and stereotyping:

- Ensure equal resources are given to both males and females
- Education on gender and age stereotypes
- Change the role of women in the Irish Constitution
- Be open to people no matter what their gender
- More gender equality in sports, e.g. more airtime and funding given to women sports
- Show people girls are strong athletes

4. Housing and homelessness

Housing and homelessness was the next most commonly mentioned equality issue in the home and community. Young people talked about the current “housing crisis” in Ireland and made a number of suggestions as to what needs to be done to improve equality in relation to this issue.

➤ *“Everyone within the community should have a home, especially the homeless, and more affordable homes.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality in housing and homelessness:

- Putting vacant/derelict houses to better use, e.g. give to people on council waiting lists
- More affordable housing
- More government funding to build more houses
- More homeless services around the country

5. LGBTI+ equality issues

According to participants, the key equality issues affecting young LGBTI+ people are exclusion in the home, lack of understanding among parents and the community, homophobia, prejudice and the use of LGBTI+ terms as insults.

What needs to be done to improve equality in relation to LGBTI+ equality issues:

- Educate parents and the wider community on LGBTI+ issues, e.g. workshops
- Create spaces for LGBTI+ young people particularly in rural areas

6. Equality issues for ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers

The key equality issues identified relating to ethnic minorities, including Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, including those in direct provision, were racism, stigma, exclusion, being treated unfairly and not being made feel welcome in Irish society.

What needs to be done to improve equality for ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers:

- Education on different cultures and ethnicities
- Programmes promoting equality among marginalised groups
- Promote integration of different ethnicities in society

7. Equality issues related to religion

The next equality issue in the home and community highlighted by young people related to religion. Some young people felt religion, in particular Catholicism, was “forced” on young people by their parents because of their own religious beliefs. They talked about the pressure and the expectations placed on them related to religion, e.g. to make their Confirmation. Young people also felt that religious involvement in schools was not a good idea and non-denominational schools would promote better integration of different religions and cultures in society. Religious discrimination in Irish society was also discussed.

➤ *“Religious parents force children to follow the religion.”*

➤ *“Do*

➤ *not force parent’s beliefs on children. Recognise the children are their own people with their own beliefs thoughts and opinions.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality related to religion:

- Parents not to force their religious beliefs on their children
- Separate religion from schools
- The Catholic Church to be more open-minded

Other equality issues in the home and community

Other equality issues identified related to home and community, from the most to the least commonly discussed, are outlined below:

Equality Issue	How to improve equality related to this issue
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Lack of facilities for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build more recreation facilities for young people • Equal funding for facilities for children and teenagers
Traveller Community , e.g. stigma, prejudice, denied access to facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More education on the Traveller Community, culture etc.
Social class , e.g. divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More education on social class issues
Education , e.g. pressure, opportunities based on where you live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put less pressure on young people in school/exams etc.
Job opportunities for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage employers to give jobs to young people
Mental health , e.g. lack of facilities, services, awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More mental health facilities and services
Drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be addressed as a health problem rather than a criminal problem
Area based discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less discrimination based on where you live
Disability , e.g. lack of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and plan adequate facilities for disabled people

Theme 5: Online

Key online equality issues

The key online equality issues identified by young people, from the most to the least commonly mentioned, were:

1. Cyber bullying and online abuse
2. Unequal access to broadband
3. Issues related to online safety
4. Social media pressures
5. Net neutrality
6. Online reporting systems

1. Cyber bullying and online abuse

The number one online equality issue for young people was cyber bullying and online abuse. Participants felt the internet and social media had made bullying and online abuse easier and anonymous websites such as www.sarahah.com and apps such as Yik Yak have facilitated it. Online abuse mentioned by young people included hurtful comments, offensive memes¹, discrimination, racism, hate speech, sexual

¹ An image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/meme>

harassment and 'slut shaming'². According to young people, cyber bullying and online abuse can have a negative impact on mental health, e.g. cause people to feel depressed. It was suggested that online racism could lead to extremism.

- *"People have an anonymous status online which makes it easier for bullying and to get to people."*
- *"People are more prone to be discriminative online as there is a digital wall protecting them."*

What needs to be done to improve equality in online bullying and abuse

- Ban apps/social networks/online platforms that facilitate cyber bullying and online abuse
- Develop youth led cyber bullying awareness campaigns
- Educate young people on what is cyber bullying and online abuse and its impacts
- Gardaí investigate cyber bullying and online abuse to deter it
- Immediate legal consequences for cyberbullying and online abuse

2. Online safety

The next most frequently mentioned equality issue was online safety. Unsafe online activities highlighted included posting nude photos online, sharing too much personal information online and consuming damaging material online, e.g. websites promoting eating disorders.

- *"If you ever put something bad on social media it could come back to haunt you."*

² Stigmatising a woman for engaging in behaviour judged to be promiscuous or sexually provocative
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/slut-shame>

- *“More education within schools on social media awareness and the risks involved and the benefits.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality related to online safety:

- More education on online safety in schools, e.g. online safety workshops, social media awareness
- Teach young people the serious and long-term effects of unsafe online activities, e.g. posting nude photos
- Enforce age limits on social media sites, e.g. proof of age, PPS number/passport etc.
- Provide parents with information about online safety

3. Unequal access to broadband

The next most frequently identified equality issue was unequal access to broadband. This was highlighted as an issue affecting rural parts of Ireland in particular. Poor access to broadband was judged to impact on people in terms of not being able to use the internet for work and lack of access to online services such as banking and medical advice. Some people also thought it could contribute to rural isolation.

- *“Country roads without Wi-fi can’t access banking, work, online doctors or people without neighbourhood Wi-fi no longer a want but a necessity.”*

- *“People in rural communities are leaving because they have no or bad Internet access.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality related to unequal access to broadband:

- Improve broadband connectivity particularly in rural areas, e.g. funding, grants, infrastructure

- Provide access to the internet to students in schools, e.g. after school, lunchtime
- Ensure all public libraries have good internet access

4. Social media pressures

The next most commonly cited online equality issue was social media pressures. Participants talked about the pressure young people feel from using social media. They stated that young people feel under pressure in relation to how they look, how they dress, what they post and how many likes they get. Social media was described as a “popularity contest” and “superficial” and can make young people feel self-conscious, like they are being judged and that they have to be constantly online.

- *“Likes and profile pictures can cause pressure, it’s a popularity contest.”*
- *“People are scared of what people will think when they post pictures and videos there self-conscious.”*

What needs to be done to improve equality related to body image and social media pressure:

- Stop using photoshop etc.
- People should be less judgemental about people’s appearances to reduce pressure

5. Net neutrality

Preventing ‘net neutrality’ in Ireland was the next most commonly mentioned online equality issue. Net neutrality is the principle that Internet service providers must treat all data on the Internet the same, and not discriminate or charge differently by user, content, website, platform, application, type of attached equipment, or method of communication. For instance, under these principles, internet service providers are unable to intentionally block, slow down or charge money for specific websites and online content.

What needs to be done to improve equality related to net neutrality:

- Develop government policies to prevent net neutrality

6. Online reporting systems

Online reporting systems was the next most commonly discussed equality issue online. Participants argued there are a lack of adequate online reporting systems and social media providers do not take cyber bullying and online abuse seriously. The current reporting systems were considered to be inadequate.

What needs to be done to improve inequality in online reporting systems:

- Stricter policies for reporting and dealing with cyber bullying and online abuse
- More security measures online, e.g. on social media
- Punishments for cyber bullying and online abuse

Other online equality issues

Other online equality issues, from the most to the least frequently identified are detailed below:

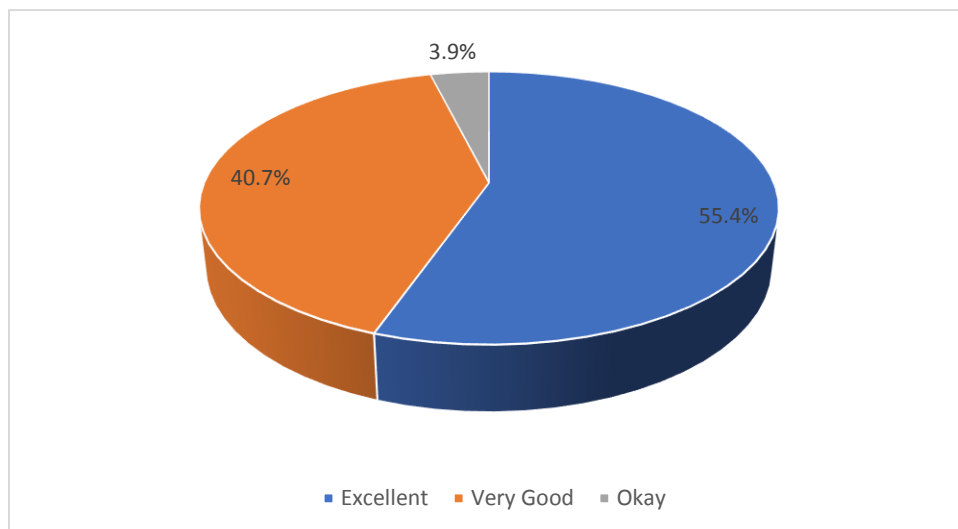
Equality Issue	How to improve equality related to this issue
Cost of educational apps/resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of Education to create free online educational resources
Stereotyping teenager’s online use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educate parents/adults on the benefits of social media communication etc.
Sexual harassment online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual harassment should be called out

Appendix A: Evaluation of Dáil na nÓg 2017

Q.1 The whole Dail na nÓg event

Over half (55.4%) of young people rated the whole Dáil na nÓg event as excellent, 40.7% rated it as very good, 3.9% as okay. No respondents rate the event as not good.

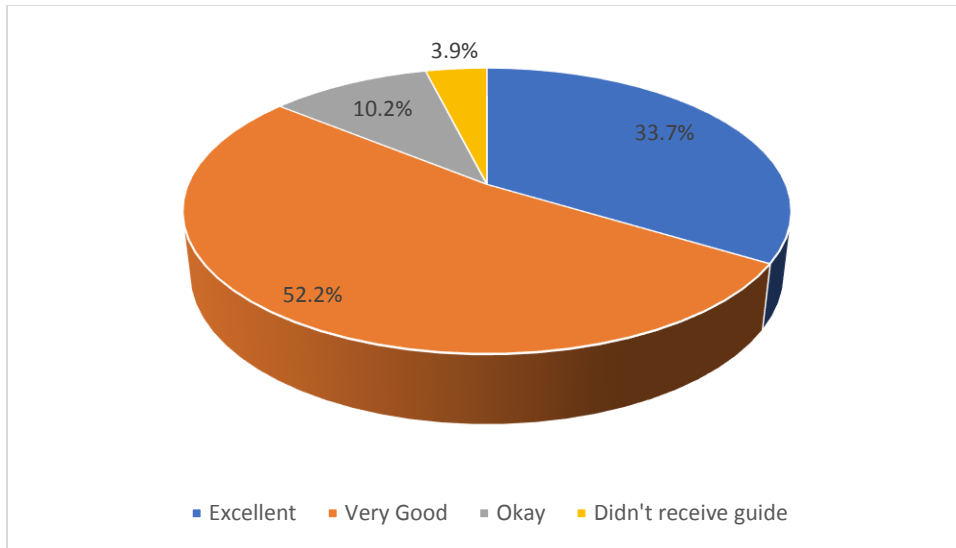
Figure 1: How would you rate the whole Dáil na nÓg event?



Q.2 The Dáil na nÓg Guide

One third (33.7%) of young people thought the Dáil na nÓg guide was excellent, over half (52.2%) thought it was very good, 10.2% thought it was okay. A further 3.9% did not receive a Dáil na nÓg Guide. No respondents thought the Dáil na nÓg Guide was not good.

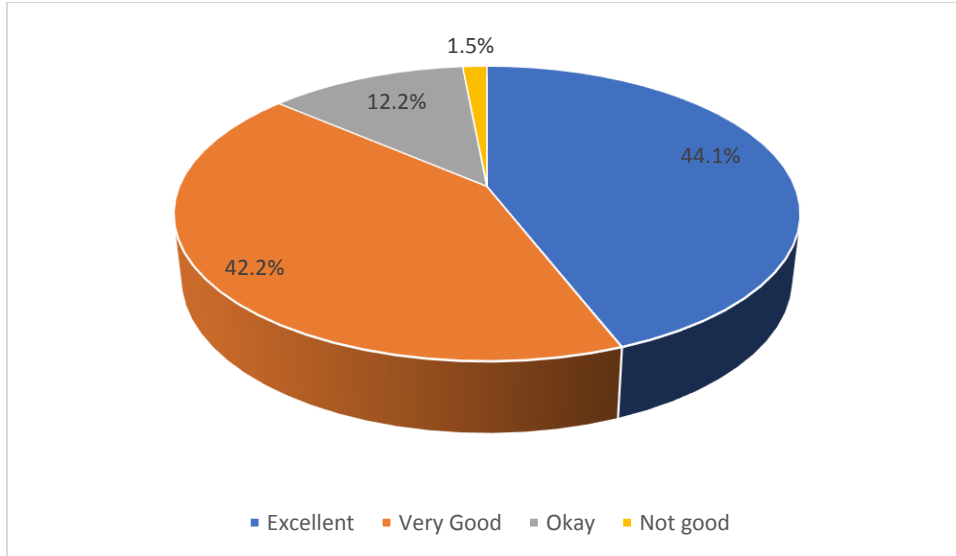
Figure 2: How would you rate the Dáil na nÓg Guide?



Q.3 The Opening Ceremony

In total, 44.1% of young people felt the opening ceremony was excellent, 42.2% felt it was very good, 12.2% felt it was okay and 1.5% felt it was not good.

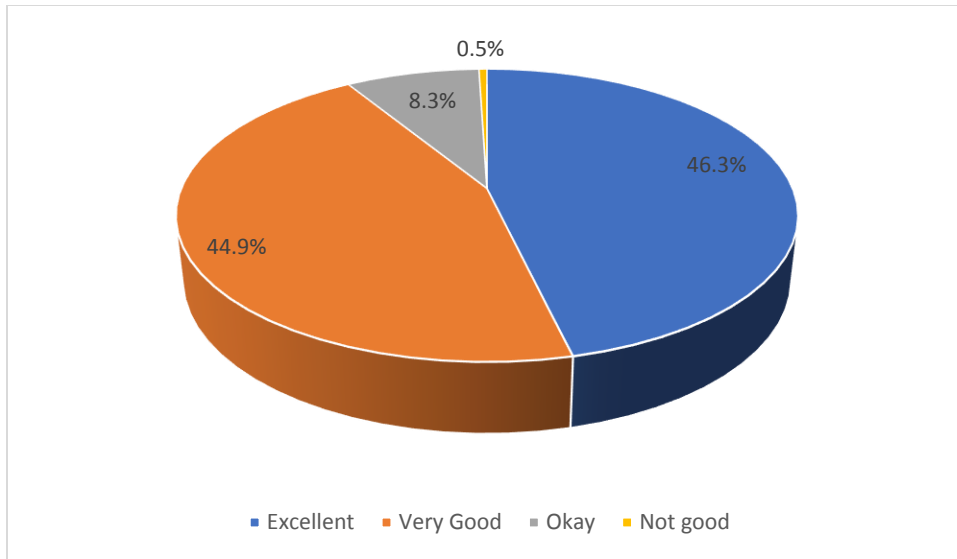
Figure 3: How would you rate the opening ceremony?



Q.4 The workshop - "world café" on five topics/settings

In relation to the workshops, 46.3% of young people stated they were excellent, 44.9% stated they were very good, 8.3% stated they were okay and 0.5% stated they were not good.

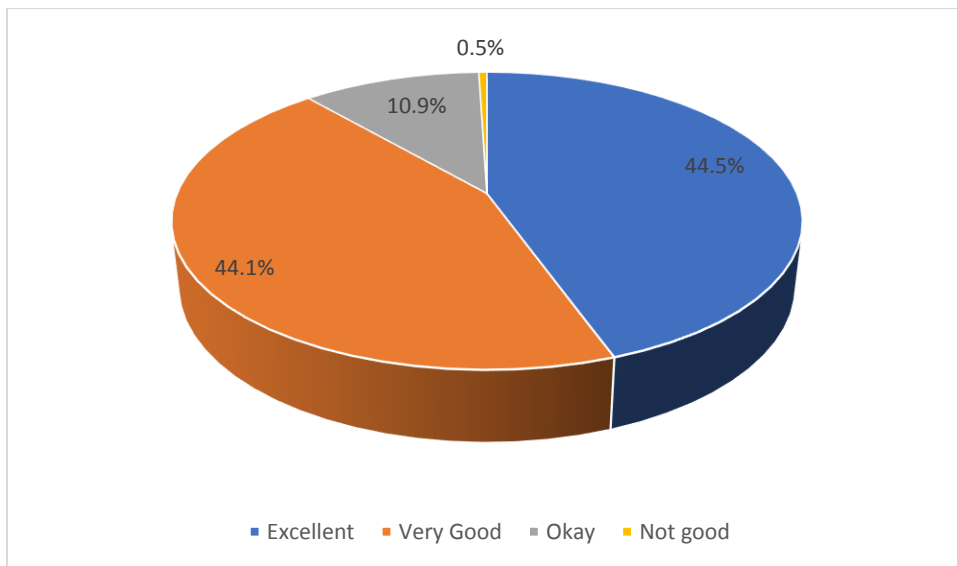
Figure 4: How would you rate the workshops?



Q.5 Voting on the five settings on the theme: Equality: in all fairness...

Overall, 44.5% of young people described the voting exercise as excellent, 44.1% as very good, 10.9% as okay and 0.5% as not good.

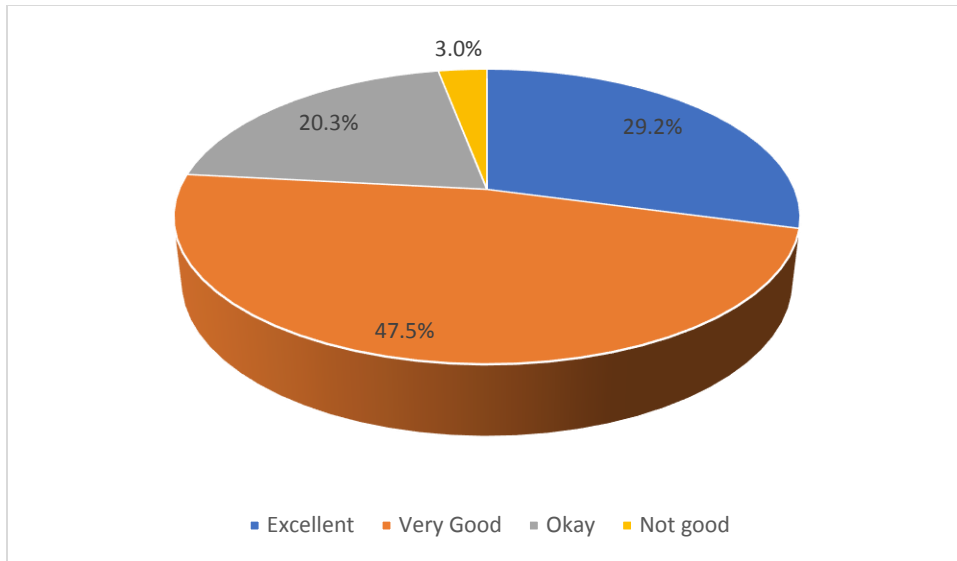
Figure 5: How would you rate the voting on the five settings?



Q.6 Developing a question with your group for the Q&A panel

In terms of developing a question with their group for the Question and Answers session, 29.2% of young people rated it as excellent, 47.5% as very good, 20.3% as okay and 3% as not good.

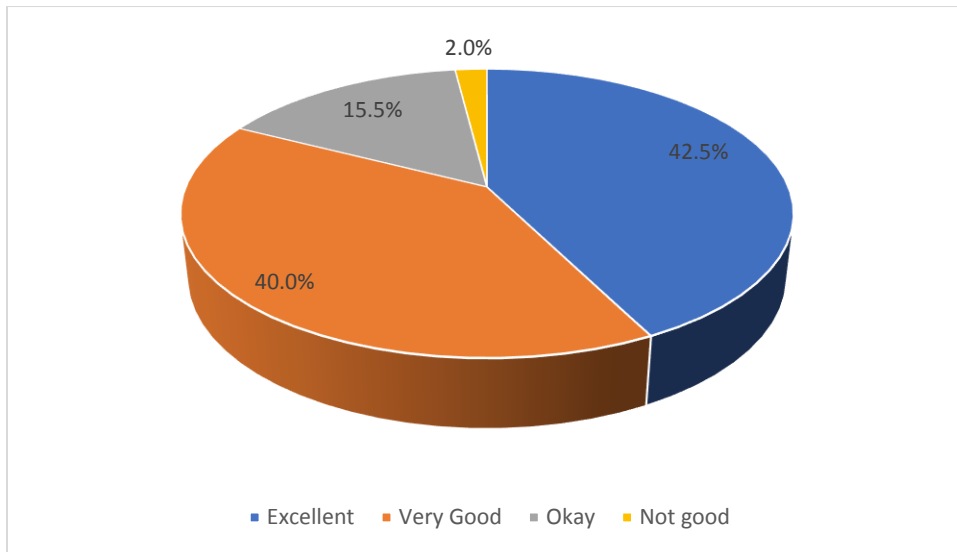
Figure 6: How would you rate developing a question with your group for the Q & A panel?



Q.7 The Q&A session with experts on equality

Over one in four (42.5%) young people stated the Questions and Answers session was excellent, 40% stated it was very good, 15.5% stated it was okay and 2% stated it was not good.

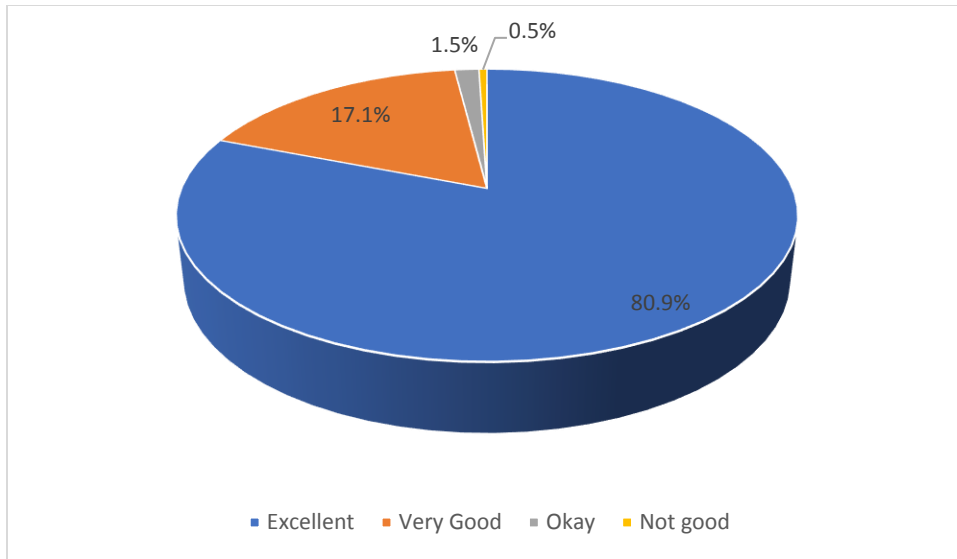
Figure 7: How would you rate the Q & A session with experts on equality?



Q.8 The venue for Dáil na nÓg (Croke Park)

Just over eight out of ten (80.9%) young people felt the venue for Dáil na nÓg, which was Croke Park, was excellent, 17.1% felt it was very good, 1.5% felt it was okay and 0.5% felt it was not good.

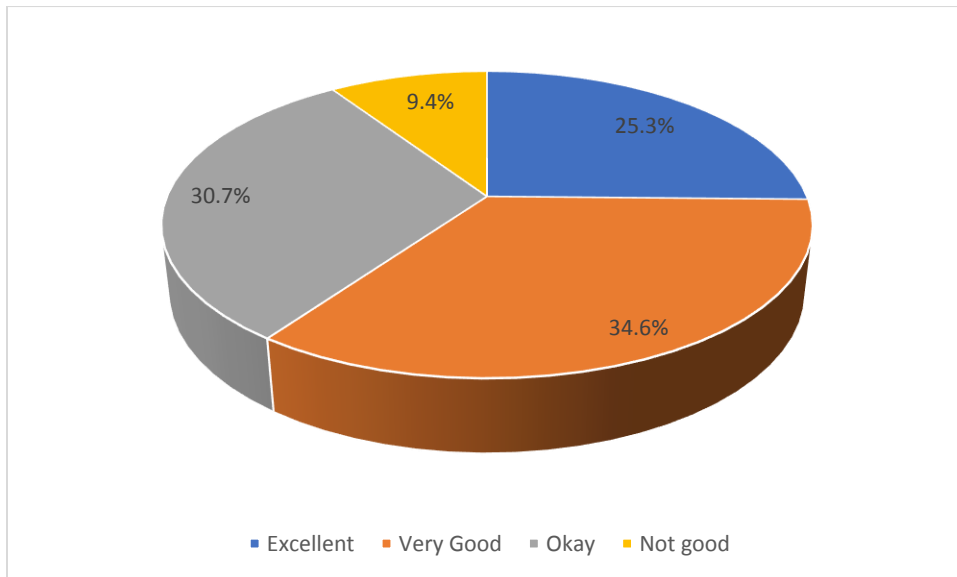
Figure 8: How would you rate the venue for Dáil na nÓg (Croke Park)?



Q.9 The food

One quarter (25.3%) of young people thought the food was excellent, 34.6% thought it was very good, 30.7% thought it was okay and 9.4% thought it was not good.

Figure 9: How would you rate the food?



Q.10 Did the facilitator in your group allow everybody to have his or her say?

The vast majority (97.5%) of young people agreed the facilitator in their group allowed everyone to have their say with just 2.5% of respondents stating facilitators did not allow everyone to have a say.

Q.11 Do you feel you had the opportunity to have your say today on the theme 'Equality: in all fairness..'

Almost all (98%) young people agreed they had the opportunity to have your say at Dáil na nÓg on the theme 'Equality: in all fairness..'

Q.12 What was the best thing about the day?

According to 39.9% of young people, the best thing about the day was the workshops discussions. What young people liked most about the workshops was having their voice heard, meeting other young people and hearing their views, the world café method of moving tables, learning new things and having open discussions.

The next best aspects of the day, from the most to the least commonly mentioned, were:

- The entertainment, e.g. the music, drummer, opening ceremony etc. (16.6%)
- Meeting new people (16.1%)
- The food (9.8%)
- The atmosphere which was friendly and energetic (5.7%)
- The Questions and Answers session (5.7%)
- Everything (4.7%)
- The video (2.1%)
- The Minister, e.g. speech and appearance at the event (1.6%)

- Photo booth (1.6%)

Q.13 What (if anything) would you change about the day?

Food was the most commonly mentioned aspect of the day that young people would like to change, with almost one in three (29.8%) respondents citing it as an issue. Overall, 17.2% of respondents said there was nothing they would change about the day. Other aspects of the day young people would change included the following:

- More time for workshops
- Better facilitators, e.g. encourage discussion, listen to everyone
- More icebreaker activities
- Speeches were too long
- Length of day was too long
- Start later to facilitate those travelling
- Less time waiting around
- More time to socialise
- Different size t-shirts
- Better directions to find the venue
- More plugs to charge phones
- Change date to after Christmas exams
- Sticking to the timetable

Other comments

Young people were asked if they had any other comments about Dáil na nÓg 2017. Other comments made by respondents included:

Positives

General:

- *"It was a great experience. Well done!"*
- *"Brilliant day. Made great friends. Really enjoyable."*
- *"Today was a brilliant experience and I am thrilled to be allowed to have such an experience."*
- *"The whole day was awesome."*

Workshops:

- *"Dáil na nÓg is an amazing chance for young people to voice issues and have their voices heard."*
- *"I really enjoyed the whole day and it really got me thinking about the equality issues in my area."*
- *"Really enjoyed the day and heard many opinions that I had never considered before."*
- *"It was really fun and it was great that everyone was engaging and interacting."*

Friendly atmosphere:

- *"Outgoing National Executive member was really welcoming and helpful."*

Q & A session:

- *"Very beneficial panel discussion. Brilliant day, thanks guys!"*

Video/venue/pack:

- *"The videos were great, and the venue was amazing. I also liked the pack we were given."*

Negatives

Food:

- *"More variety of food."*
- *"More breakfast options."*

- *“Please have vegan food next time. People didn't have food.”*

Issues with time/length:

- *“Not enough consideration for people travelling long distances.”*
- *“Boring - too long!”*

Workshops:

- *“I think warm-up games before the start of the workshop would've been a good idea.”*
- *“When I tried to give my opinion to the facilitator, either people weren't listening, or they spoke over me.”*

Q & A session:

- *“Try and make less questions for one panel. Maybe less groups or join groups that had the same theme together.”*
- *“I thought some of the answers went on for too long and were repetitive.”*
- *“Some speeches were very long. People lose their attention span when people speak for that long.”*
- *“Would be nice to have an open Q&A session.”*

Entertainment

- *“For entertainment bring in a professional dancer.”*

Venue/directions

- *“Everything was good, but it should have more signs, so we don't get lost again.”*