



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Comhairle na nÓg
Young Voices. Local Issues.

A large, stylized graphic of the map of Ireland, rendered in shades of purple and blue. The map is positioned diagonally, with the top right corner of the island pointing towards the top right of the page. The title text is overlaid on the purple portion of the map.

Comhairle na nÓg Online Networking Events Report, 2021

Introduction



The National Participation Team for Comhairle na nÓg organised and ran three Comhairle Members' Networking Events over the Easter holidays on 7th, 8th and 9th April 2021. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, these events were held online and were attended by a total of 101 participants from each of the 31 Comhairlí na nÓg around the country.

The purpose of the Networking Events is to give Comhairle members the opportunity to come together to share information and good practice, and to look at the challenges that they face and overcome in an informal way.

For the second year running, it was necessary to replicate the Networking events in an online format, bringing young people together from all Comhairlí around the country to complete a series of online activities and challenges

The purpose of this report

This report documents all of the engagements with Comhairle members over the three days and gives a run down of the schedule, outlining the key findings, the processes used, and the outcomes.

The report will be made available to all participants and will be used to inform the planning of future online events, as well as feeding into the theme for Dáil na nÓg 2021.

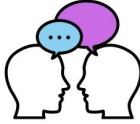

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Schedule





Comhairle na nÓg
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NETWORKING 2021

12:00 OPENING
12:10 SPOT PRIZE QUESTION 1 
12:15 BREAKOUT SESSION 1
12:30 COMHAIRLE SPOTLIGHT 1 
12:40 NETWORKING SESSION
13:10 LUNCH 
13:30 SPOT PRIZE QUESTION 2 
13:35 DÁIL NA NÓG 2021
13:45 BREAKOUT SESSION 2
14:15 BREAK 
14:25 SPOT PRIZE QUESTION 3 
14:30 COMHAIRLE SPOTLIGHT 2 
14:40 THE BIG VOTE
14:50 CLOSING
15:00 END

If you lose connection
just rejoin the
zoom link

Youth Hosts 2021



Wed 7th: **Ben Gallagher**, Tipperary

Thurs 8th: **Jade Fitzgerald**, Kerry

Fri 9th: **Katie Smith**, Cavan

Their role: To act as co-MCs and to introduce the agenda and the various different elements of the day. They were also responsible for asking the Spot Prize questions and announcing the winners

Youth Advisory Committee

Ben, Jade and Katie were all part of our Youth Advisory Committee which was established in advance of the Events. We recruited 8 Comhairle members from across the country to help us in our planning and to explore a more interactive way of running the events online in a fun and engaging way.

Other members of the Advisory Committee were **Ruth Egan**, Offaly Comhairle; **Alana Browne**, Donegal Comhairle; **Noelle Greene**, Roscommon Comhairle, **Clara Reid**, Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Comhairle and **Ryn McGrath**, Galway County Comhairle

Spot Prize Questions



Test your Comhairle knowledge...

Throughout the day, participants were given the opportunity to win €20 One4All vouchers by answering these Comhairle questions:

(i) How many Comhairlí are there in Ireland? 31

(ii) What year was the first Dáil na nOg held? 2001

(iii) What does DCEDIY stand for? *Dept of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth*

And the winners were...

Wed 7th April

- Jack Cassidy, Louth
- Rebecca Staunton, Mayo
- Annesley Scarff, Westmeath

Fri 9th April

- Mohammed Naeem, Mayo
- Ronan Garrivan, Monaghan
- Lucia McMahon, Monaghan

Thurs 8th April

- Emer Neville, Tipperary
- Anna Quinn, Sligo
- Síofra McElduff, Sligo

Breakout Session I



Introductions & ice-breakers

The group were split into 5 Breakout Rooms for Session I, each with their own facilitator. Young people were introduced to each other and to the rules of the ice-breaker.

Scavenger Hunt Game:

The facilitator suggested objects for the young people in their group to find. Examples included:

- Something with one of the Comhairle logo colours blue or purple
- A green mug
- A piece of fruit
- An unopened Easter egg

And the winners of the €15
One4All vouchers were....

Wednesday 7th April

- **Galway City** Ashlee Harrison
- **Limerick** Josh O'Dwyer
- **Limerick** Jane Burke
- **South Dublin** Jagoda Ennis
- **Galway City** Aislinn Franco

Thursday 8th April

- **Carlow** Dominika Frankowska
- **Galway County** Eimear nic Dhonnchadha
- **Wicklow** Cayden Eliot
- **Longford** Aoibhe Reilly
- **Longford** Lauren Whelan

Friday 9th April

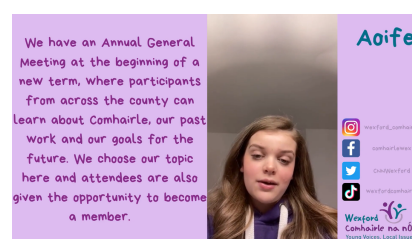
- **Roscommon** Liam Pearse
- **Kilkenny** Emma O'Brien Cahill
- **Monaghan** Jeanette Murphy
- **Meath** Alina Mardari
- **Kilkenny** Rhys Kennedy

Comhairle Spotlight

3 Comhairlí per day volunteered to be in the spotlight as part of this year's Networking Events. This involved Comhairle members either presenting live about the work of their Comhairle or submitting a prerecord. They also had the option of showing a video of what they've been up to

Example of what was presented on:

- Our work on our topic in Comhairle
- Something we are really proud of in our Comhairle
- Something we have learned at Comhairle
- Our Future Plans for Comhairle



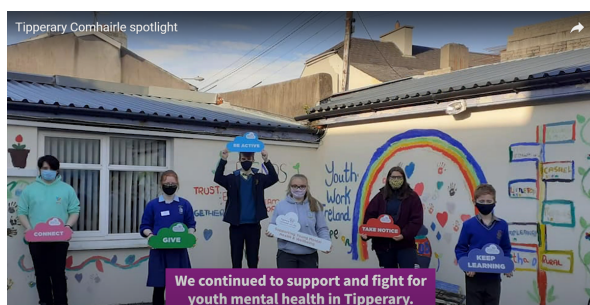
Wexford made a brilliant video
– click on image above to watch

Featured Comhairlí

Limerick Comhairle na nÓg showed a video about their #NotAroundUs campaign WHO award – click on image below to view



Kerry Comhairle gave a super live presentation with terrific graphics – you can have a read [here](#)



A Year in the Life of Tipperary Comhairle
– watch the vid [here](#)

Comhairle Spotlight

Meath Comhairle member Siun gave a live presentation – here's a little taster of what she had to say .."2020 was the second year on our topic of body positivity and we were delighted with our work on our #BeBodyPositive and #IMPerfectasME. Even during our time in lockdown we found safe ways to distribute and promote these positive messages"...



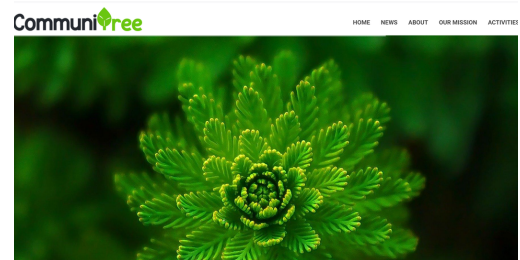
Kildare Comhairle members Ríona and Ciara pre-recorded two videos to tell you all about their experience of Comhairle, and what they've been up to

Watch Ríona's vid [here](#)

Watch Ciara's vid [here](#)

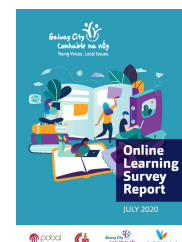
Featured Comhairlí

Waterford Comhairle introduced us to their forthcoming Communitree App & all the great work they've been doing on their Climate Change topic. Read more [here](#):



Mayo Comhairle made a video about all the interesting stuff they've been up to over the past year. You can watch [here](#)

Galway City Comhairle gave a super presentation on their work since 2020. Highlights include their Online Learning Survey. You can read more [here](#):



Mentimeter presentation – Suzanne and Mark

- What does Comhairle mean to you?
- What are the strengths of your Comhairle?
- What do you do at a Comhairle meeting?
- What would you like to improve in your Comhairle?

What does Comhairle mean to you?

A word cloud featuring various terms related to community and social interaction. The most prominent words are 'friendship' in large blue letters, 'community' in large red letters, and 'teamwork' in large pink letters. Other significant words include 'a voice' in yellow, 'hardworking' in orange, 'activism' in red, and 'communication' in blue. Smaller words scattered around include 'your voice matters', 'belonging', 'togetherness', 'leadership', 'change', 'open', 'empowerment', 'craig', 'purpose', 'a break from family', 'voices heard', 'fun', 'team work', 'creative output', 'understanding', 'young voices', 'peace', 'action', 'its a safe place', 'local issues', 'like minded people', 'positive change', 'respect', 'involvement', 'listening', 'voice', 'opinions', 'new people', 'environment', 'cooperation', 'innovation', 'family', 'escapism', and 'politics'. The words are arranged in a dense, overlapping manner with varying colors and sizes.

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Networking Session



What are the strengths of your Comhairle na nÓg?

Mentimeter

Big sense of community

Teamwork

Teamwork and cooperation

Really good at zoom

We can communicate well

everyone is friendly & accepting

Togetherness

Open minded

Members are very driven

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What do you do at a Comhairle meeting?

Mentimeter

actively listen to eachother

Get to know each other

discuss ideas and issues in the local community

Have the craic

Laugh and Learn

Have fun, catch up and work on our topic/project

Have chats

respect eachothers opinions and views

Have fun and discussions on important subjects that is chosen for that week

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Networking Session



What do you do at a Comhairle meeting?

Mentimeter

Discuss our theme and the actions that we want to take to make our area a better place to be.	talk about ongoing projects bantergive opinionspray covid will let us meet eventually	Speakers
Share work or research	We add to plans that focus on our main topic while also checking in with any local issues.	Have fun but get work done at the same time
We chat and discuss our topic, sometimes we invite speakers to help us with our project	talk about progress, future ideas and how everyone is doing	Get updates on the other projects within the comhairle

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What would you like to improve in your Comhairle?

Mentimeter



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Dáil na nÓg 2021



Brief on Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive process By National Executive members...



Jack Cassidy, Louth, and Rebecca Staunton, Mayo – Wed. 7th

Síofra McElduff, Sligo, and Molly Beckett, Roscommon – Thurs 8th

Emily Navagh-Burke, Meath – Fri 9th

- Dáil na nÓg is a key national event in the Comhairle na nÓg calendar. It takes place every two years (on alternative years we have the Comhairle National Showcase)
- 200 Comhairle members attend, representing each of the 31 Comhairlí
- Dáil na nÓg delegates have the opportunity to participate in workshops on the chosen theme for the day.
- The theme is generated from the list of topics that are currently being worked on by Comhairlí around the country. At this year's Networking Events, Comhairle members will have the opportunity to prioritise the topics on this list that they feel are most important for young people.
- The top ranking topics will then be circulated as a survey to Comhairle members all over the country to allow the wider Comhairle community to have their say on the theme for this year's Dáil na nÓg.
- Delegates at Dáil na nÓg will be tasked with coming up with a series of recommendations based on this theme to affect change for young people in this area.
- At the end of the day, delegates have the opportunity to vote on the key topic or recommendation under this theme
- The topic that receives the most votes will form the basis of the work plan of the incoming Comhairle na nÓg National Executive

Dáil na nÓg 2021



Brief on Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive process, contd...

- In advance of DNN, one representative from each of the 31 Comhairlí na nÓg is elected to the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive.
- This group is tasked with following up on the recommendations by the young people at the workshop discussions at Dáil na nÓg
- The National Executive has a term of office of two years
- The National Executive is facilitated and supported by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and the National Participation Office who ensure that they get the opportunity to engage with the appropriate Ministers, policy-makers, Oireachtas Committees and other decision-makers.



Breakout Session II



Purpose of this session was to give young people a chance to find out information about the potential topics for the National Executive to work on which will be voted on at Dáil na nÓg 2021.

There were 7 topics to discuss. These topics are based on those that Comhairle members are working on throughout Ireland.

- **MENTAL HEALTH**
- **EQUALITY**
- **BODY IMAGE**
- **LGBTI+ & INCLUSIVITY**
- **SOCIAL ISOLATION & YOUTH RESILIENCE**
- **YOUTH FACILITIES**
- **DRUGS & ALCOHOL**

On Body Image...
"It has never been
a topic for Dáil na nÓg"

In small groups, this session allowed participants to explore and learn about the seven topics. Using Padlet, a facilitated discussion took place using some of the following questions.

- What do you think about the topics on the Padlet?
- Is there anything you noticed or is there something that stood out for you in particular?
- Are there any topics that you think would be really good for the National Executive to be working on?
- Are there any topics that you think would not be as good for the National Executive to be working on?

Some of the emerging themes and comments for & against certain topics are noted in speech bubbles over next few pages...

On Youth Facilities - "Not enough facilities, particularly in more rural areas and smaller counties "

The Big Vote

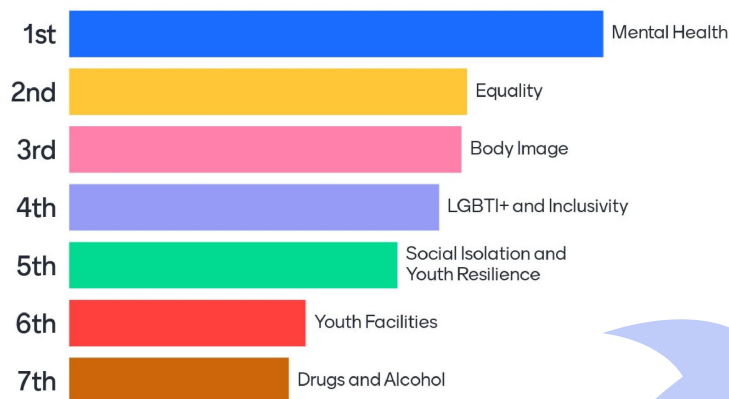


On each of the 3 days, the participants had the opportunity to cast their vote on the seven topics, taking into consideration everything that was discussed in the breakout rooms. A ranking system was used on Mentimeter. The total number of votes received on each topic across the three days will be counted and combined. The top 3 ranking topics will be circulated as a survey link to the 31 Comhairle coordinators. This will go to a wider vote to allow the wider Comhairle community to have their say on the theme for this year's Dáil na nÓg.

Wednesday's Vote

Rank these topics in order of preference for Dáil na nÓg 2021:

 Mentimeter



On Social Isolation & Youth Resilience - "More support. Teens are told they're old enough to work things out themselves and sometimes they can't and are left with no support. "

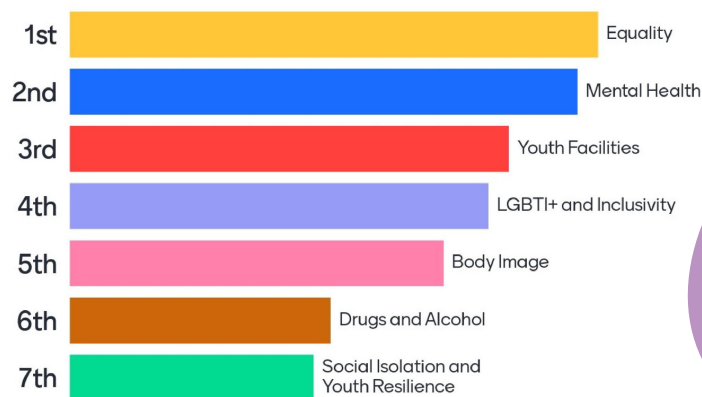
The Big Vote



Thursday's Vote

Rank these topics in order of preference for Dáil na nÓg 2021:

Mentimeter



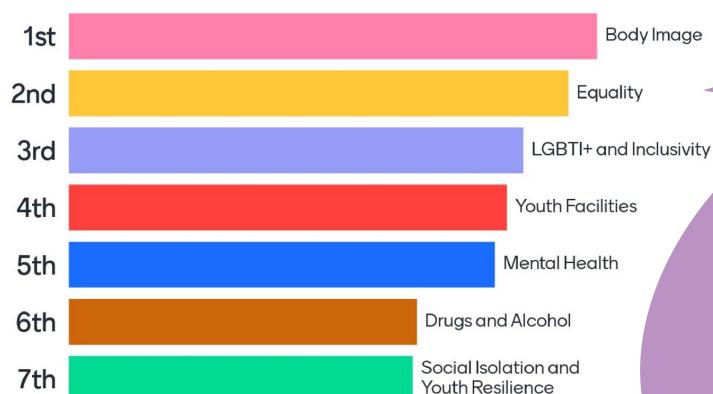
On Mental Health - I think this is an important theme because it's at the centre of everything and it's vital"

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Friday's Vote

Rank these topics in order of preference for Dáil na nÓg 2021:

Mentimeter



"Drugs and alcohol is a great topic that can educate the younger generation on the consequences and the problems associated with drugs and alcohol"

The Big Vote



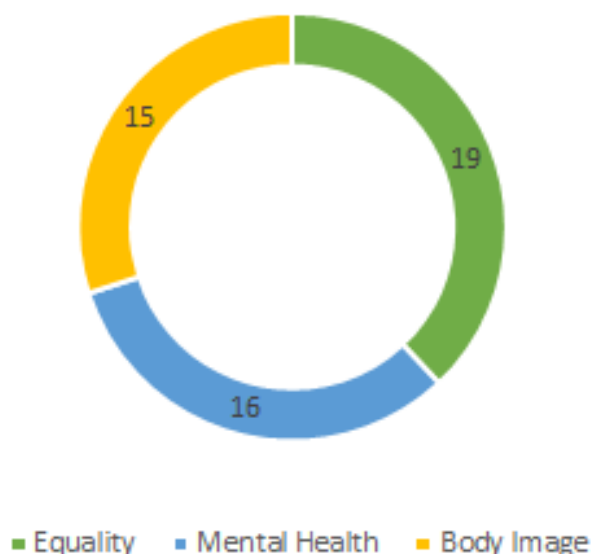
On LGBTI+ "Very good topic, especially with youth advocates standing up against homophobia in the past few months by speaking to Dáil officials with UNICEF and BeLonG To"

"Inequality is incredibly apparent in Ireland, especially stereotyping and cultural roles in society"

And the results are in.....

Below are the three topics which received the most votes across the three days. These top ranking choices will be circulated as a survey link to the 31 Comhairle coordinators. This will go to a wider vote to allow the wider Comhairle community to have their say on the theme for this year's Dáil na nÓg.

Top 3 topics for Dáil na nÓg vote





What participants loved about the Events

""Comhairle Spotlights, it was very insightful to see what other comhairle around the country were doing ""

"The amazing progressive people"

""It was inclusive and fun ""

""I enjoyed being in a safe and comfortable space to talk about my opinions ""

"Being able to meet new people and discuss interesting and new topics with them and really broaden my opinions "

*Thank
you!*