



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Comhairle na nÓg
National Executive

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Meeting newsletter 3

21st May 2022

Attendees



Carlow, Tasfia Hossain; Cavan, Rebecca Englishby; Clare, Oisín Coughlan; Cork City, Akshita Gupta; Cork County, Amy O'Brien; Dublin City, Emma Whelan; Dublin South, Marly Bah; DLR, Prachi Agrawal; Galway City, Leo O'Connell; Kerry, Máire O'Shea; Kildare, Aoibhe Toft; Kilkenny, Michael Doyle; Laois, Lucy Doyle; Leitrim, Niamh Ryan; Longford, Dariusz Konefal; Mayo, Sinead Murray; Meath, Grayson McGill; Monaghan, Dylan McKenna; Offaly, Jamila Mokrani; Roscommon, Ruth Cunningham; Sligo, Alfie Barron; Tipperary, Jack Ryan; Wexford, Doireann Rossiter; Wicklow, Kate Macadam

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Presentation by Eileen Leahy: an overview of the landscape and how RSE fits into this.

The presentation dealt with all of the questions asked by the group from the last meeting under the following broad headlines

- The curriculum
- Teacher training
- Mandatory RSE
- Involve Parent
- External providers

You can download the full presentation below:

<https://www.comhairlenanog.ie/wpcontent/uploads/2022/05/Relationships-and-Sexuality-Education-Overview.pdf>



A more inclusive relationship and sexuality education

Within the topic of inclusive relationships and sexuality education, five key issues were identified:

- The policy and approach to RSE
- The content of the current programme
- Delivery of RSE
- The resources to support RSE
- Other (sometimes unreliable) sources of information outside school

Download the full overview below:

<https://www.comhairlenanog.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/RSE-workshop-overview-from-Dail-na-nOg-Presentation.pdf>



Break out groups – reflecting on Dáil na nóg report

Using Padlet – general feedback and comments across the two breakout rooms on the following questions

What do you think about Eileen's update?

- Solves some questions but opens the big question of what path we should go around our topic
- ...Very informative. I think the government is very slow to actually make changes. But I think their plan is quite good if they fully follow through with it
- The review was very interesting. I feel it covered all bases. This is positive but also leaves us in an awkward position as to what to do. I would have preferred for there to be instant reform but we don't live in a perfect world and that's not always possible
- Update was very detailed and actually a reality check about things we don't really know about. And it is essential to be updated on what's actually going on
- Understand the need to be more realistic on what can be achieved within the timeframe of the executive
- Found it difficult to stay engaged with the online format.
- Confused and believes that we need to narrow it down, i.e. gender equality in RSE, Sexuality in RSE.. etc.

Do you think the NCCA are on the right track?

- I do think the change is taking much too long to be implemented
- It's a constantly changing thing, in 3-5 years what suits now could be outdated
- Yes recommendation and research-wise. Implementation now needs to be paramount
- I think they are on the right track but they need to be aware that there will be a lot of challenges along the way. Whether that is for school boards, parents etc. Prioritising will be very important for this.
- The NCCA has correctly identified a lot of the issues and flaws with the current RSE programme but they failed to address the fact that it still falls under the umbrella of SPHE, which has its own issues such as the fact that it can be taught without any qualification.
- They also didn't offer any suggestions on whether or not the programme should be made mandatory or not, they primarily spoke about the addition of extra resources for teachers, but what good are resources if schools can pick and choose and basically devise their own programme

Break out groups – reflecting on Dáil na nÓg report



Using Padlet – general feedback and comments across the two breakout rooms on the following questions

Anything you disagree with?

- As long as there is a standardized curriculum and schools get enough freedom without inhibiting the learning, no
- Great that a lot of the problems recognised by the government were things we mentioned
- Potential challenges, find a way to create a respectful RSE curriculum so that all schools run the program
- The disagreements within the report came from the adults or schools rather than the young people. (in the review)
- Don't just get young people's opinions on the matter– allow them to come to meetings and actively participate in creating the entire thing. Who knows how to teach young people about young people's issues better than young people?

What do you think about the report from Dáil na nÓg workshops?

- It was really helpful, but I would have loved more elaboration on tangible things to be done by young people
- I thought it was very comprehensive and will help us a lot in the future. I think we should focus more on healthy relationships as it is unrepresented in my view
- Very informative and shows us how similar our ideas are
- I think that we are all just really overwhelmed by the amount of work that is needed to be done and this kinda made us feel that we're supposed to help change the whole thing, which we can't do in a year in a half. so I think that we could actually get something done if we honed in on one specific part of it, we all decide what little part we want to work on and then we can create or design something that will change that sector for the better, like how last year's group honed in on the travel aspect of the issues and created something that made a small section of it better

Date for the next meeting



- Likely to take place **midweek in June** - date to be confirmed pending availability of guest speaker and expert Professor Saoirse Nic Gabhainn. Saoirse is a Professor in Health Promotion and Project Leader in the Health Promotion Research Centre and the World Health Organisation Collaborative Centre for Health Promotion Research - you can read her full Bio here in advance of the next meeting
- <https://www.nuigalway.ie/our-research/people/health-sciences/saoirsenicgabhainn/#>
- It will be a full day in-person meeting in DCEDIY buildings, Miesian Plaza, Baggot St, Dublin 2
- Karyn will be in touch with everyone in advance with details of reimbursement of travel expenses, directions and public transport info