



Comhairle na nÓg
Young Voices. Local Issues.



Five Year Development Plan

Prepared by the Department of
Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
gov.ie



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Glossary of initialisms

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| AGM | Annual general meeting |
| BOBF | Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures |
| CNN | Comhairle na nÓg |
| CYPSC | Children and Young People's Services Committee |
| DCYA | Department of Children and Youth Affairs (now DCEDIY) |
| DCEDIY | Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth |
| ETB | Education and Training Board |
| EU | European Union |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulation |
| KPI | Key Performance indicator |
| LCDC | Local Community Development Committee |
| NAPD | National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals |
| NYCI | National Youth Council of Ireland |
| PDA | Principals and Deputy Principals' Association |
| PPN | Public Participation Network |
| UNCRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| UNCRPD | United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| YAP | Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland |

Foreword

I greatly welcome the development and publication of this Five Year Development Plan for Comhairle na nÓg.

Comhairle na nÓg was established as the permanent structure representing young voices in decision-making at local and national level in Ireland in response to Ireland's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Comhairle na nÓg's core values are to listen to and respect young people and ensure that young people's views are given due weight in decision-making at local and national level. It is more important now than ever that we listen to young people and ensure that their voices are included in all decision-making processes that have an impact on their lives. We have learned that we pay a price when we do not listen to young people and that policy and programme design can be lacking without their input.

Comhairle na nÓg structures are well established in every Local Authority in Ireland as the voice of young people at local level. Comhairle members have participated in the development of a wide range of facilities, services and policies. Particular work themes at local and national level include mental health, online safety, drugs and alcohol awareness, climate, inclusion and diversity.

Comhairle members have contributed to national policy, including the development of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*, the Review of the Relationships and Sexuality Education in primary and post-primary school for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, a new strategy for the Environmental Protection Agency, assessing the impact of COVID-19 on young people's wellbeing, teacher supply and physical activity, the Climate Action Plan, and many more issues.

The purpose of this Five Year Development Plan is to ensure that the role and voice of Comhairle na nÓg is given due recognition and strengthened by increasing awareness and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg and what Comhairle na nÓg does.

A key action is the establishment of a dedicated National Participation Office, which will strengthen and enhance the structures, systems, processes and relationships that underpin the work of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive. The actions set out here will make Comhairle na nÓg more visible and accountable, and enable adults to better ensure that the voice of young people has due weight in decision-making.

Formal structures and pathways to aid recruitment of seldom-heard young people will further enhance Comhairle na nÓg's culture of inclusion and participation, ensuring a strengthened, diverse and vibrant Comhairle na nÓg community into the future.

Young people are not only our future, they are also our present and we must respect their rights in everything we do today. Young people are insisting on a better future and they have important, timely, relevant and helpful views on how we can achieve this. A strong, inclusive, well recognised and respected Comhairle na nÓg structure gives young people the place they deserve at the decision-making table and gives adults in decision-making roles structured access to that voice.

Roderic O’Gorman T.D.

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

June 2021

Executive Summary

What is Comhairle na nÓg?

Child and youth councils in each of 31 Local Authority areas

Recognised structure for participation for 12-17 year olds

Provides youth with a voice in national and local decision- making

Over 1,000 young members

Comhairle na nÓg Five Year Development Plan strategy process

The Five Year Development Plan aims at building on Comhairle na nÓg's significant success so far. It will further enhance the Comhairle structure, reach more children and young people, influence more decision-makers and deliver on Article 12 of the UNCRC, to make a true difference to the lives of young people.



The Five Year Development Plan for Comhairle na nÓg was developed under the guidance of a steering committee that was established specifically for the strategic planning process. Some of the key phases included in the development of this plan were:



Environmental scan

Data and information
National policies, strategies and frameworks
International research



Youth consultation

National youth survey and consultation event
Experiences, priorities, changes



Stakeholder consultation and written submissions

Opportunities, strengths, challenges, priorities

Vision, mission and values

Vision



Comhairle Na nÓg is recognised locally and nationally as the go-to structure empowering young people of all backgrounds to speak up, be heard and influence decisions on matters that affect their lives

Mission



Our mission is to be the permanent rights-based structure that represents the voice of young people in Ireland and provides them with a platform to meaningfully engage with decision-makers and influence matters that affect them

Values



- Welcoming and inclusive
- Proactive
- Collaborative
- Mutual respect
- Making a difference
- Authentic
- Committed
- Enjoyable
- Visible and accountable

Comhairle na nÓg strategy goals and objectives

GOAL 1: Reach and influence – To extend our reach and engage more broadly with young people and decision-makers to strengthen the voice and influence of young people in local and national decision-making

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| <p>We will seek to extend our reach to all young people by enhancing our approach to recruiting new Comhairle members in addition to exploring opportunities for other young people (non-members) to have a say in issues that affect their lives.</p> | <p>We will enhance the visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg in schools and other education settings, through greater commitment and support from the Department of Education and other education partners.</p> | <p>We will develop formal structures and pathways in conjunction with relevant groups at national and local level to facilitate the active recruitment of seldom-heard young people, and encourage their participation in Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive.</p> | <p>We will strengthen the collective voice of Comhairle na nÓg by encouraging the creation of alliances between Comhairlí to work together at a national level on issues of mutual interest or national importance.</p> |
| <p>We will continue to champion and further enhance the role of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive by actively seeking opportunities to connect these structures with Government, decision-makers, policy developers and others.</p> | <p>We will engage with adult decision-makers locally to ensure they are committed to seeking youth input through Comhairle na nÓg in a meaningful way, and to including this input in their decision-making processes.</p> | <p>We will embed Comhairle na nÓg in local communities through greater co-working with adult decision-making structures, the local political system and other local and regional organisations.</p> | <p>We will ensure that Comhairle na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg are the primary participation mechanism and starting point, at local and national level, for the development of new participation initiatives and structures relevant to emerging policy priorities identified by young people and decision-makers.</p> |

| Comhairle na nÓg strategy goals and objectives | | | |
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| <p>GOAL 2: Operational delivery – To ensure that Comhairle na nÓg has the resources, systems, processes and supports to operate effectively and to enable young people to have a say in issues and decisions that affect their lives</p> | | | |
| <p>We will further enhance and develop our internal structures and processes where necessary to enable efficient and effective Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and National Executive operations.</p> | <p>We will guide and support Comhairle na nÓg members to successfully perform their roles.</p> | <p>We will engage with Comhairle members to understand their experience of Comhairle na nÓg and incorporate their voices into the design of Comhairle operations and the delivery of the Five Year Development Plan.</p> | <p>We will further develop the capacity and capability of people directly linked to the delivery of Comhairle na nÓg to ensure that they are fully equipped to successfully perform their roles.</p> |
| <p>We will ensure that Comhairle na nÓg is adequately funded and resourced to facilitate meaningful youth participation at local and national level.</p> | <p>We will incorporate the principles and tools included in the National Framework for Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making into our own ways of working and actively encourage its implementation among organisations with whom we interact and engage.</p> | <p>We will support adherence to all relevant legislation, including but not limited to, child safeguarding legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in the conduct of all Comhairle operations, particularly those relating to the recruitment of and communication with our members and other young people.</p> | |

Comhairle na nÓg strategy goals and objectives

GOAL 3: Culture, recognition and communication – To enhance the awareness, recognition and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg among all young people and to cultivate a culture of inclusion and participation in a diverse and vibrant Comhairle community.

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| <p>We will develop the brand and profile of Comhairle na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg so that they are recognised as the principal consultation mechanisms for young people locally and nationally on topics and issues that affect their lives.</p> | <p>We will develop and implement a national communication plan to ensure visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive among young people.</p> | <p>We will develop and implement a national communication plan to ensure visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive among local and national decision-makers, parents, the general public and other adult stakeholders.</p> | <p>We will develop an internal communication plan to enhance communication and engagement between Comhairlí and across the broader Comhairle na nÓg community.</p> | <p>We will actively promote and maintain a culture that reflects the values of Comhairle na nÓg and is welcoming and inclusive for a diverse membership base, including seldom-heard young people.</p> |
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Comhairle na nÓg strategy goals and objectives

GOAL 4: Structures and relationships – To strengthen and enhance the structures and relationships that underpin the work of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive, and build on these so that they are organised, coherent and effective – enabling them to reach their potential and ensure the voices of young people are heard

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| <p>We will develop a National Participation Office to manage and coordinate the activities of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg, the National Executive and related youth participation initiatives and structures.</p> | <p>We will develop mechanisms to ensure cross-Government engagement with Dáil na nÓg and the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive.</p> | <p>We will ensure active cross-departmental engagement to drive the work of the National Participation Office and the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan.</p> | <p>We will further develop the local Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee structure and work with these groups and their members to enhance the effectiveness of Comhairle na nÓg in each local area.</p> | <p>We will allocate responsibility for proactive stakeholder engagement and relationship management to a national Comhairle na nÓg staff member based within the National Participation Office.</p> |
| <p>We will establish a series of networking groups that enable Local Authority and Comhairle Coordinators to interact more frequently within a facilitated structure and to engage with their peers across counties.</p> | <p>We will develop local and national structures to maintain relationships with Comhairle alumni and provide opportunities and pathways for past members (18+) who have matured out of Comhairle na nÓg, to remain connected to the work of their Comhairle.</p> | <p>We will build relationships with national and international bodies and funding programmes where opportunities exist for partnerships and collaborations to further the influence and success of Comhairle na nÓg both as a mechanism for youth voices and in relation to topics of importance to Comhairle members.</p> | <p>We will work with the National Participation Office and the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee to formally consider the potential value of establishing a legislative basis for the Comhairle na nÓg local and national structure.</p> | |

| Comhairle na nÓg strategy goals and objectives | | |
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| GOAL 5: Evidence-based innovation – To build an evidence base that informs best practice, and actively seek new and innovative ways to develop and enhance Comhairle na nÓg | | |
| We will explore opportunities to provide children under the age of 12 with a voice on matters that affect their lives. | We will embed research, evidence-based innovation and new ways of thinking and working in all elements of Comhairle operations. | We will explore new innovative models of online operations to be used in Comhairle na nÓg and invest in technology to enhance Comhairle operations and support new ways of working. |
| We will be informed by, and contribute to, emerging international trends, patterns and developments in youth participation and associated implementation structures and models. | We will harness national, European and international networking and information sharing opportunities to enable Comhairle na nÓg to share good practice and learn from the experience of other structures and countries. | We will continuously review, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg, the National Executive and other participation structures as they develop over the life of this development plan and beyond, to ensure they continue to optimally support and enable Ireland’s children and young people to have their voices heard on matters that affect their lives. |

This Five Year Development Plan will deliver the following...

Development of formal structures and pathways to aid the recruitment of seldom-heard young people

Ensuring adequate funding for Comhairle na nÓg to facilitate meaningful engagement

Development of a National Participation Office to manage and coordinate Comhairle na nÓg activities

Strengthen the collective voice of Comhairle na nÓg by creating alliances between Comhairlí to work together

Enhanced relationships with schools to encourage participation and the nomination of a diverse pool of members

Review of the Comhairle na nÓg brand

Guidance and support for Comhairle na nÓg members so they can successfully perform their roles

Continuous reviews and evaluations of, and reports on, the effectiveness of Comhairle na nÓg as it develops, to ensure it continues to optimally support youth participation

Development of internal and external communication plans

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

Introduction

The rights of children and young people to participate in decisions that affect them, and to have their voices heard and heeded, are underpinned by Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and Article 24 of the European Union (EU) Charter of Fundamental Rights. Ireland ratified the UNCRC in 1992, and thus committed to ensuring that children and young people can participate in decisions that affect their lives. Article 12 of the UNCRC gives the child the right to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child.¹

The development of child and youth participation in Ireland is based on these articles. *The National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives*, published in 2000, framed these rights in national Government policy in Ireland for the first time. Goal 1 of the strategy states that: “children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.” This goal is directly aligned with Article 12. The initial youth participation structures were put in place under the remit of the strategy. This included the first Dáil na nÓg event in 2001 and the establishment of Comhairle na nÓg in 2002.

About Comhairle na nÓg

Comhairle na nÓg is a grouping of child and youth councils operating in each of the 31 Local Authority areas across Ireland. Comhairle na nÓg gives children and young people the opportunity to be involved in, and have a voice in the development of, local and national services and policies and any issues that affect them in their local area. It is the recognised national structure for participation by children and young people (aged 12-17 years) in decision-making. Comhairle na nÓg is funded and managed through the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). At the local level, Comhairle na nÓg is managed by Local Authorities.

Comhairle na nÓg has two main objectives. Firstly, to encourage young people to identify, prioritise and progress topics that are important to them through enabling their influence on decision-makers to take action. The second objective is, to act as a consultative forum for adult decision-makers who want to include the views of young people in their work, whether it is policy development or gathering feedback on services and facilities.

Since its inception nearly 20 years ago Comhairle na nÓg has developed significantly, due to the commitment, leadership and funding provided by DCEDIY (formerly the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)) and the effective delivery by Local Authorities. Today, Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive provide a recognised mechanism for youth consultation at local and national level, and individual Comhairlí operate successfully in all Local Authorities across Ireland. This is the key youth participation structure and a critical component of Ireland's democratic system, deepening citizen engagement and providing young people with a voice in decision-making.

In 2020, 950 young people were elected as Comhairle members, working on over 67 projects across 14 key topics such as climate change, mental health and wellbeing, discrimination and equality, education, drugs and alcohol, and safe communities. Comhairle na nÓg participated in over 40 consultations in 2020 and delivered 33 submissions and presentations to local and national decision-makers. The COVID-19 restrictions resulted in fewer engagements than in previous years.

Comhairle na nÓg holds events (both local and national) throughout the year. The typical lifecycle² of Comhairle na nÓg (or term of office of Comhairle members) is two years. This time frame allows for selecting a topic, progressing work on it, reporting on its progress and achieving the outcome or desired change. The local cycle (below left) outlines the stages necessary to progress the topic for the year, while the national cycle (below right) outlines the funding process as well as national events.



Figure 1 - Comhairle na nÓg lifecycles

Comhairle na nÓg has developed substantially since it was first established in 2002, but it can do more. The Five Year Development Plan provides an opportunity to:

- build on its significant success;
- further enhance the Comhairle structure;
- reach more children and young people;
- influence more decision-makers; and
- continue to realise children's right to a voice, as provided for in Article 12 of the UNCRC.

Though DCEDIY will take the lead on a number of initiatives, this is a cross-departmental plan. It will require input from a broad range of national and local stakeholders. Those responsible for delivering the actions associated with the Five Year Development Plan are identified in the action plan (see Chapter 4).

Development of youth participation and Comhairle na nÓg 1989 – 2020

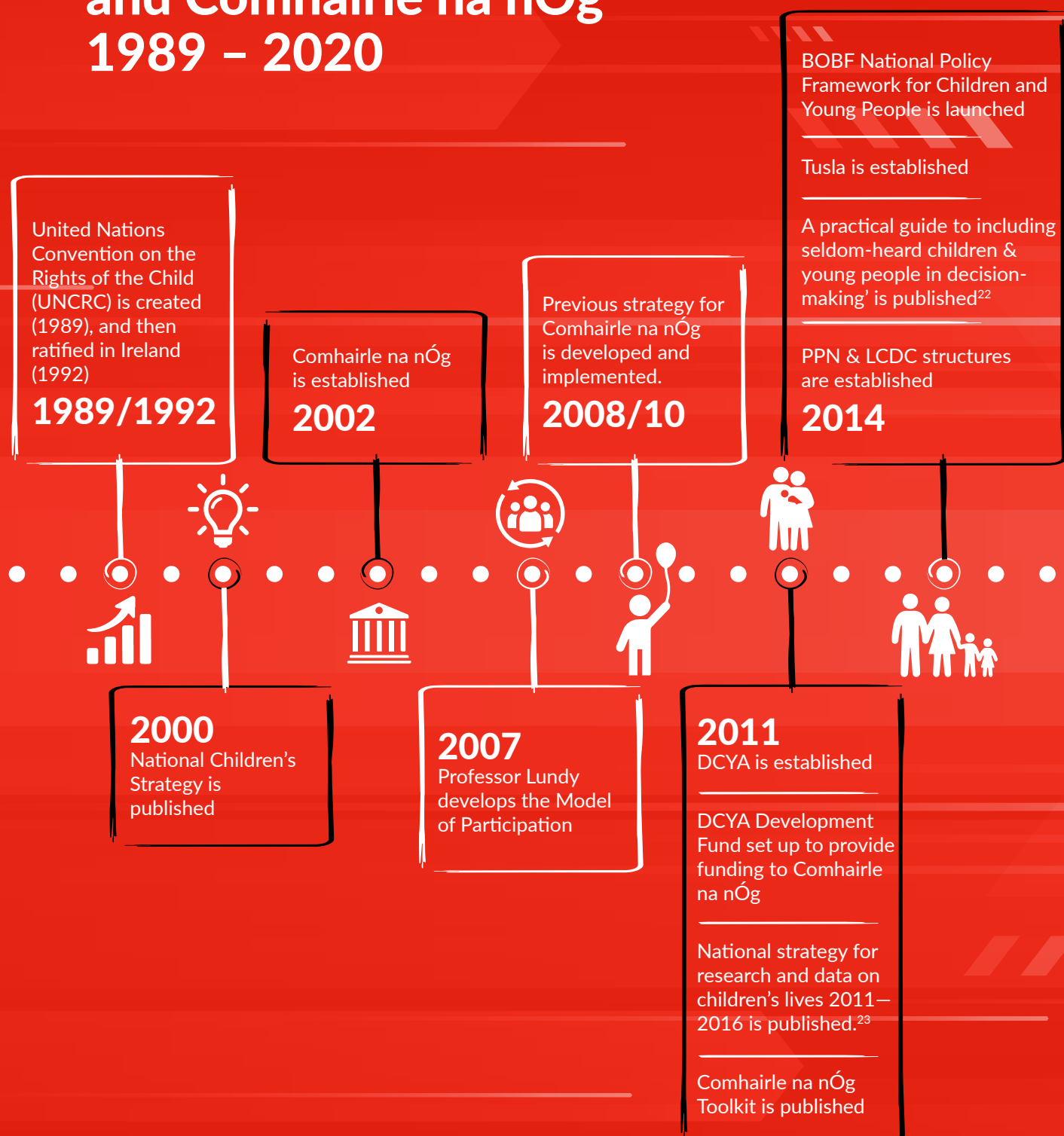
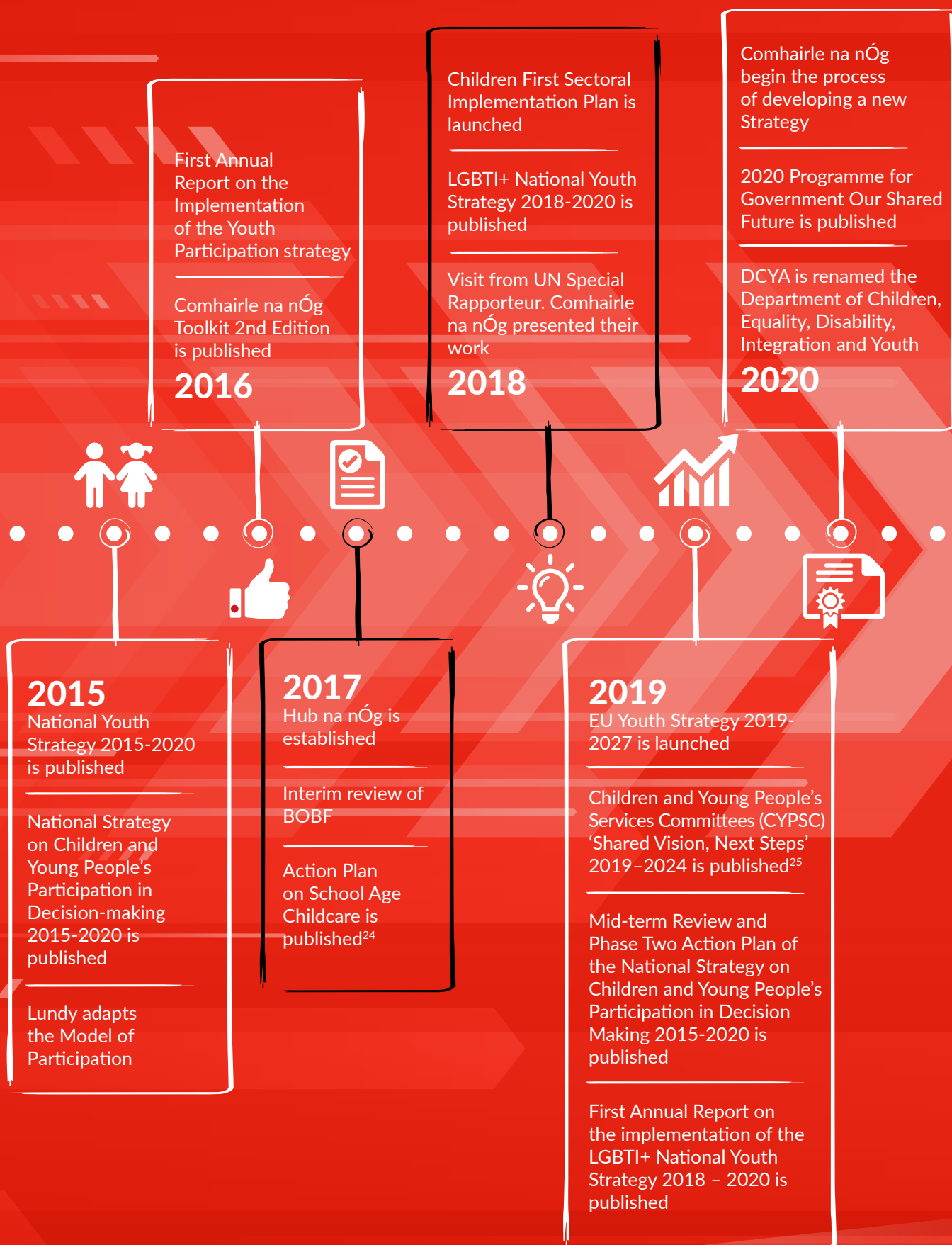


Figure 2 - Timeline of youth participation in Ireland



Local, national and international context for participation

Ireland is firmly committed to the implementation of Article 12 of the UNCRC, and is a world leader in terms of facilitating and promoting the voice of the child. Comhairle na nÓg is central to this. The local context in which Comhairlí are embedded is critical, both to existing achievements and to the further progress that the implementation of this development plan will bring about. The national policy imperative for participation underpins and supports the development of the participation agenda. The growing international attention being paid to the voices of children and young people in key policy areas and in their own lives further supports the implementation of this plan.

Local participation context

The importance of citizen engagement in decision-making has played a larger and larger role in government structures (both national and local) in recent decades. The Department of Rural and Community Development engages with communities and gives local people real influence on the development of policies and strategies. From 2014, the formal establishment of Public Participation Networks (PPNs) in each Local Authority has enabled the adult population to take an active role in policy-making at a formal level, giving them a greater say in the local government policies and programmes that affect their communities. Local Community and Development Committees (LCDCs) further support public participation by overseeing the development, coordination and implementation of clear and integrated approaches to local and community development. These structures allow the general population to have a say and to participate in local decisions.

Ireland's ratification of the UNCRC has facilitated the broadening of citizen engagement to include children and young people in decisions that affect their lives. The prevalence of youth participation has also become more prominent in recent years through the establishment of a range of government-led or supported structures.

Comhairle na nÓg is a participation mechanism not unlike the PPNs and LCDCs. It allows children and young people to have their voices heard in matters that affect their lives. Comhairle na nÓg provides a forum across all sectors (for both specific, one-off consultations and for ongoing engagement at a local level) when

issues that affect children and young people are being discussed and policy decisions are being made. Government departments that have made specific commitments to consultation and community engagement recognise and draw on the Comhairle na nÓg structure to ensure that the perspectives of children and young people are included in decision-making.

Government departments have extended the ways in which children and young people are included in decision-making by connecting them, through Comhairle na nÓg, to key local structures. Some examples include: the Education Training Boards (ETBs) responsible for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions and Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs), which are supported by DCEDIY, and bring a diverse group of local agencies together to engage in the joint planning of services for children and young people and act as the local delivery mechanism for the coordination and planning of these services. This core group of partners is critical to the success of the Comhairlí, and their representatives are brought together by the local Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committees.

The mechanism provided by Local Authorities under the remit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is the key structure in which Comhairle na nÓg sits. Each Local Authority hosts its own Comhairle and provides a dedicated staff member, a venue, technological and administrative supports (among others), and access to local representatives and decision-makers. As a result, Comhairle na nÓg is now at the heart of local decision-making.

National participation context

In 2014, DCYA (now DCEDIY) published Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The national policy framework for children & young people, 2014-2020. This framework outlined the Government's priorities in relation to children and young people, and set out a vision for "Ireland to be one of the best small countries in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future."³

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (BOBF) placed a significant emphasis on the importance of giving young people an opportunity to have a voice in matters that affect their lives. Transformational Goal 3 of this framework – “Listen to and involve children and young people” – is inherently linked to Article 12 of the UNCRC. It sets out the Government’s commitment to strengthening efforts to ensure that children and young people have a voice in decisions that affect them, both individually and collectively, that they are supported in expressing their views in all matters affecting them and that those views (including those of “seldom-heard” children) are given due weight.⁴

BOBF fundamentally shaped the policy context for children and young people in Ireland today. Though it has reached the end of its term, it provided a foundation for the development of a number of other important strategies.

The *National Youth Strategy*⁵ was published by DCYA in 2015 as the first constituent strategy of BOBF. Sharing the BOBF’s overall vision, the strategy’s specific aim was to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential by respecting their rights and listening to them, while protecting and supporting them as they transitioned from childhood to adulthood.

National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making, 2015 – 2020

BOBF laid strong foundations for the *National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making, 2015 – 2020* developed and published by the Department in 2015. This strategy was the first of its kind in the world. It was guided and influenced by the UNCRC and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and adopted the principles of the *Council of Europe Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18*.⁶ It aims at ensuring that children and young people have a voice in their individual and collective everyday lives. The strategy is primarily for those under the age of 18, but it also embraces the voices of young people in their transition to adulthood. The strategy is a cross-Government initiative and includes actions to be delivered by a broad range of stakeholders. The Lundy Model of Participation was adopted as the guiding theoretical framework. This was due to the rights-based approach on which it was developed.

The Lundy Model of Participation

The Lundy Model of Participation⁷ is grounded in the UNCRC and takes a rights-based approach to involving children in decision-making. It breaks down Article 12 of the UNCRC into four key elements:

- Space – children and young people must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their views
- Voice – they must be facilitated to express their views
- Audience – the views must be listened to
- Influence – the views must be acted upon, as appropriate.

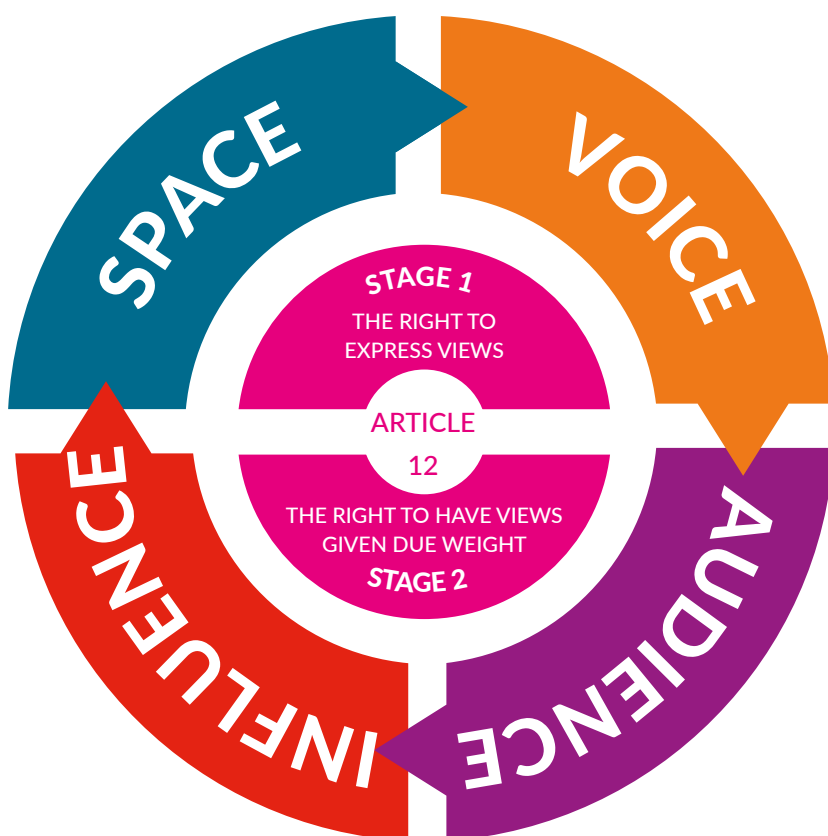


Figure 3 – The Lundy Model of Participation

As part of the development of the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*, Professor Lundy worked with the strategy development sub-group on a participation checklist to help organisations working with and for young people to comply with Article 12 of the UNCRC.

This checklist was designed to ensure that children and young people's voices are enabled, that they have the space to express their views, that they have an audience for those views, and that those views will have influence.⁸ The *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making* builds on the children's participation infrastructure developed by the Department and other organisations since the publication of the *National Children's Strategy* in 2000. It treats children and young people as "citizens of today", recognising their right to be respected and heard during childhood, their teenage years and in their transition to adulthood.⁹ The strategy was informed by a significant body of research completed by the DCYA and the Irish Research Council in 2013¹⁰, which explored the experiences of children and young people and the outcomes of their involvement in the various participation initiatives hosted by the Department over the previous 10 years.

The *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making* places particular emphasis on Comhairle na nÓg, and sets out a number of priorities.

- The role and capacity of Comhairle na nÓg will be enhanced through the development and implementation of a Comhairle na nÓg Five Year Development Plan, aligned to local Government structures and policies, and including children under the age of 12 and children and young people who are seldom heard (Action G20.2).
- Comhairle na nÓg will be supported and improved thanks to the administration and oversight of the Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund awarded to Local Authorities (Action G20.4).
- Support for Comhairle na nÓg will be maintained across the country and it will benefit from trainings to ensure the development of best practice (Action G20.5).

The Five Year Development Plan for Comhairle na nÓg is a direct result of the actions identified in the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*. It provides an opportunity to build on Comhairle na nÓg's achievements so far, and to future-proof this structure.

In 2017, research on child participation structures in Ireland¹¹ analysed the effectiveness of Comhairle na nÓg as a mechanism for the implementation of UNCRC rights and as a structure for enabling children and young people's voices to be heard by influential decision-makers. While the report found that Comhairle na nÓg is functioning as a structure that enables children's voices to be heard, it also provided evidence that improvement is required in relation to this.

In 2019, a mid-term review¹² was completed on the progress of the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*. It reported that 93% of the agreed actions had either reached completion or were in progress. This led to the development of the Phase Two Action Plan to progress the remaining actions over the final period of the strategy.

*Programme for Government – Our Shared Future*¹³ outlines “a vision of an Ireland for all ages” and places specific emphasis on youth participation by identifying the following intentions:

- developing new model of engagement with a specific youth strand;
- establishing a National Youth Assembly, which would include a Rural Youth Assembly;
- increasing funding for the national network of Comhairle na nÓg;
- encouraging young people to participate in community development initiatives;
- publishing and implementing a successor to BOBF;
- developing mechanisms to include the voice and views of young people in decision-making at community, county and national levels;
- conducting a comprehensive national consultation with young people on how their voice can be heard more clearly and on the issues that they want their Government to focus on; and
- developing a new *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making, 2021 – 2025*.

The *Programme for Government* also emphasises its commitment to strengthening local government structures, ensuring that people have a role in shaping the economic and social development of their own area, and actively encouraging and facilitating participation.¹⁴

National participation framework

The **National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making**¹⁵ was developed by Hub na nÓg after extensive engagement with a broad range of key stakeholders (including early learning and care representatives, school children, primary and secondary school teachers, social workers, youth service workers, Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers and nurses). The framework focuses on children and young people's individual and collective participation in decision-making and aims at supporting organisations and decision-makers on their journeys toward adopting good practice in this context. It is underpinned by the UNCRC, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*.

The national participation framework's vision is "participation with a purpose". This takes both the purpose of the organisation and the purpose of involving children and young people in decision-making into account. It means that when children and young people are involved in decision-making, their views are listened to, taken seriously, given due weight and have the potential to lead to an outcome or change.¹⁶

During the development of the framework, Hub na nÓg identified that training, support and guidance on a rights-based approach to engaging with children and young people was needed. Three checklists were developed to encourage their effective participation in both face-to-face and online settings (these are included in Appendix 3). These checklists went through a series of drafts and practical tests. They were piloted by organisations that engage with children or young people on a daily basis. The framework, along with its checklists, will be the cornerstone of youth participation in Ireland and will underpin the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan.

In addition, the Department and Hub na nÓg have developed a set of good practice principles on how to engage children and young people in decision-making and ensure that their voices can have an impact.¹⁷

Good practice principles for engaging with children

- Involve children in decision-making from the start
 - Encourage blue-sky thinking from them
 - Avoid giving them information that can limit their thinking
 - Use a strengths-based approach, starting with their own experience and understanding
 - Use open consultation questions or easily understood survey questions developed by children
 - Use creative and age-appropriate methods
 - Avoid interpreting their views during the process
 - Ensure that they evaluate the process and that they receive feedback on any decisions made
-

Good practice principles for engaging with children - to ensure impact

- Ensure that the necessary human and financial resources are in place
 - Identify the children's views and explain how they will be used
 - Explain how the children will be provided with feedback on decisions that are taken
 - Report on the views of children and avoid adult interpretations of those views
 - Ensure that children play a prominent role in presenting their own views at relevant events
-

EU participation context

Within the wider European context, the *EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027* was launched by the Council of the European Union. It is designed for EU Member States to adopt, and involves young people and youth organisations in its implementation by encouraging them to work closely with both national and European institutions.¹⁸ It promises to:

- create more opportunities for young people;
- reach out to more diverse young people; and
- work towards youth social inclusion and the eradication of youth poverty.

The objective of the strategy is “to be able to address the challenges that young people are facing all over Europe and to provide a common and coherent EU response to them and to complement the efforts and initiatives of Member States in relation to this.” It fosters youth participation in democratic life, in line with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

The EU Youth Dialogue is a series of consultations giving young people between 15 and 25 years of age the opportunity to participate in decision-making about matters that affect their lives. It is the structure that supports the *EU Youth Strategy*. In Ireland it is delivered by the National Youth Council of Ireland’s (NYCI’s) Young Voices – Have Your Say programme. It engages young people and policy-makers across the EU in joint discussions about the development of youth policy both at a national and European level. A National Working Group chaired by DCEDIY has overall responsibility for its implementation in Ireland. Comhairle na nÓg contributes to this process.

Youth participation structures in Ireland

The Five Year Development Plan for Comhairle na nÓg uses the foundations of youth participation set out in the *National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making, 2015 – 2020* and aims at building on this to ensure that the relevant structures and supports are in place to enable youth participation to happen in practice.

Developing the structures around youth participation has been a key priority of the Department since the publication of the first *National Children’s Strategy* in

2000, under what was then known as the National Children's Office.¹⁹

Today, a number of both local and national structures are in place to facilitate the participation of children and young people in matters that affect their lives.

These include:

- **DCEDIY** (formerly DCYA) – this department leads the national effort to improve the lives of children and young people in Ireland.
- **Comhairle na nÓg** – child and youth councils operating in each of the 31 Local Authority areas across the country.
- **Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committees** – non-statutory advisory groups established by the Local Authority to provide advice and support to the Local Authority, the Coordinator and members of Comhairle na nÓg regarding the work plan for, and active participation in, decision-making processes.
- **Dáil na nÓg** – the national youth parliament for young people between 12 and 17 years of age, comprising 200 delegates elected through the Comhairlí.
- **Comhairle na nÓg National Executive** – elected representatives from each of the 31 Comhairle na nÓg. On behalf of young people, the National Executive takes action on the top recommendation agreed on at the previous Dáil na nÓg. National Executive members have a term of office of two years and meet the Department and the Participation Team once a month to progress their agenda.²⁰
- **The Participation Team** – comprising regional Participation Officers and a Participation Coordinator, the Participation Team is funded by the Department. It provides advice, resources and training to all 31 Comhairle na nÓg Coordinators, who are the key organisers of the local Comhairlí.
- **Comhairle na nÓg Coordinator** – key organiser of each Comhairle.
- **Hub na nÓg** – the Children and Young People's Participation Hub was established in 2017 under the *National Strategy for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*. The Hub provides support to Government departments, state agencies and non-governmental organisations to enable them to give children and young people a voice in decision-making on issues that affect their lives (with a particular focus on those that are seldom heard).

- **National Participation Office (forthcoming)** – the Five Year Development Plan will see the establishment of a National Participation Office within DCEDIY. This National Participation Office will manage and coordinate the activities of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg, the National Executive and other related youth participation initiatives and structures.

Some of the youth participation structures are local and some are national. The footprint of Comhairle na nÓg in each of the 31 Local Authorities contributes to its national presence.

Monitoring and review

Youth participation has been developed significantly in Ireland since the start of the millennium, but there is more to do. Youth participation structures have been developed using an iterative process, with each new development seeking to further enhance the voice of children and young people in matters that affect their lives. A commitment to monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the developing structures over the years, and seeking to improve them in line with best practice, has allowed real progress to be made.

This evaluation process will continue for the duration of the Five Year Development Plan and remain in place afterwards. This will ensure that youth participation structures are further strengthened, and that the voice of Ireland's children and young people continues to be heard. A Cross-departmental Oversight Committee will be established (see Objective 4.3) to oversee and drive the implementation of this plan. A mid-term review of agreed key performance indicators (KPIs) will ensure that all actions are being progressed and will be delivered.

Chapter 2: Strategic planning process

Strategic planning context – COVID-19

The strategic planning process for the Five Year Development Plan was undertaken against the unusual and unprecedented backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the operations of Comhairle na nÓg and presented new challenges to Comhairlí as they sought to adapt their ways of working in line with public health advice. Most notable was the need to transition from physical face-to-face meetings to virtual meetings and events. Regular group meetings at local and national level and large events and gatherings such as the annual general meeting (AGM) and National Showcase are central to Comhairle operations, but COVID-19 restrictions made them impossible. In order to ensure that Comhairle operations and the work of the National Executive could be sustained, the Participation Team and Comhairle Coordinators established a virtual operating model using online tools and technologies. Their determination, and their commitment to preserving the role of Comhairle na nÓg, meant that group meetings were quickly migrated to an online setting. Every Comhairle was functional and operations were able to continue throughout the pandemic. Though some members faced difficulties accessing broadband or the necessary technologies to participate, and many members missed the social interaction of physical meetings, this new model enabled the work of the Comhairlí to progress during the national lockdown.

The strategic planning process for the Five Year Development Plan required considerable stakeholder consultation and engagement. This was also facilitated through a virtual environment. A series of stakeholder focus groups and a large youth consultation event were held remotely using online consultation tools, an online survey was issued to Comhairle members (past and present) and a written submissions form was available for those who were unable to attend but wished to contribute. This multi-faceted approach ensured that all relevant Comhairle na nÓg stakeholders were given the chance to contribute to the strategic planning process despite the challenges associated with COVID-19.

COVID-19 has altered the landscape in which Comhairle na nÓg operates, and a significant element of uncertainty remains as we continue to navigate the pandemic. The COVID-19 context has encouraged a more detailed consideration

of past, present and future Comhairle operations. It has provided an opportunity to reflect on the current model, and on adjustments that may be required, so that Comhairle na nÓg can continue to develop and prosper over the next five years.

Steering committee for the development of the Five Year Development Plan

Comhairle na nÓg's Five Year Development Plan was developed under the guidance of a steering committee that was established specifically for the strategic planning process. The steering committee comprised representatives from the following:

- Department of Rural and Community Development
- Department of Education
- DCEDIY
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Local Government Management Agency
- Local Authorities
- National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)
- Comhairle na nÓg National Executive
- Comhairle na nÓg members
- The Participation Team
- Comhairle na nÓg Coordinators.

The steering committee was established to guide the delivery of the Five Year Development Plan and advised DCEDIY on:

- any relevant considerations for planning and executing the project;
- the prioritisation of actions to be implemented under the Five Year Development Plan;
- data and other relevant information for the development of Comhairle na nÓg as a recognised national structure to ensure the participation of children and young people in decision-making;
- indicators and ways to monitor progress towards the outcomes pursued in the Five Year Development Plan; and
- any other relevant matters.

In particular, the Committee was responsible for:

- considering draft indicators against which progress towards fulfilment of the Five Year Development Plan's outcomes can be assessed;
- assessing, as appropriate, whether the Five Year Development Plan contains all the actions necessary to address current issues, and to respond to potential emerging and changing needs, in the uncertain context of the current COVID crisis; and
- advising on DCEDIY's requirements in relation to the preparation of progress reports and reviews (to be agreed as part of the project and to include a mid-term report and a final evaluation of the Five Year Development Plan after its conclusion in 2025).

The steering committee met a number of times during the plan's development process to review progress at key milestones.

Stages of the strategic planning process

The strategic planning process for the Five Year Development Plan was built around a rigorous framework. It was designed to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Plan addressed the priority needs of Comhairle na nÓg, and that Comhairle na nÓg's successes and achievements so far could be built upon.

Phase 1: Environmental scan

Firstly, an environmental scan was completed in order to gain a detailed understanding of Comhairle na nÓg and the context within which it operates. The environmental scan enabled a deeper knowledge and understanding of a number of relevant areas, including:

- the development of youth participation in Ireland since the ratification of the UNCRC in 1992, and the structures that are in place today;
- the national policy context and Government priorities in relation to children and young people;
- the work of Comhairle na nÓg and the structures and supports that allow it to operate;
- the roles of Government departments, Local Authorities, state agencies, child and youth organisations, and other relevant organisations; and
- participation models and structures in place in other countries.

This was a desk-based research and fact-finding exercise to gather information and evidence relevant to the Comhairle environment (where it was available). It was designed to capture key considerations that may be pertinent to shaping and informing the plan from the external environment. The results were provided to every member of the steering committee so that they had a common and informed understanding of the history and policy framework behind Comhairle na nÓg.

Phase 2: Stakeholder consultation and call for written submissions

A broad consultation process was undertaken with key Comhairle na nÓg stakeholders. This included a series of focus groups, one-to-one meetings and written submissions. A broad range of interested parties were represented and contributed, including the Participation Team, Comhairle Coordinators, Local Authorities, Government departments, youth organisations, education bodies and other bodies and organisations with a specific interest in children and young people and the work of Comhairle na nÓg.

Ongoing consultations with the steering committee also played a key part in the strategy development process.

Phase 3: Youth consultation

A critical element of the strategic planning process was a meaningful process of consultation with young Comhairle members themselves. This was facilitated by Foróige, Ireland's leading youth organisation, and included a survey and a youth consultation event. In total, the youth consultation process involved over 400 members (both past and present). Their input was a key component of the strategic planning process.

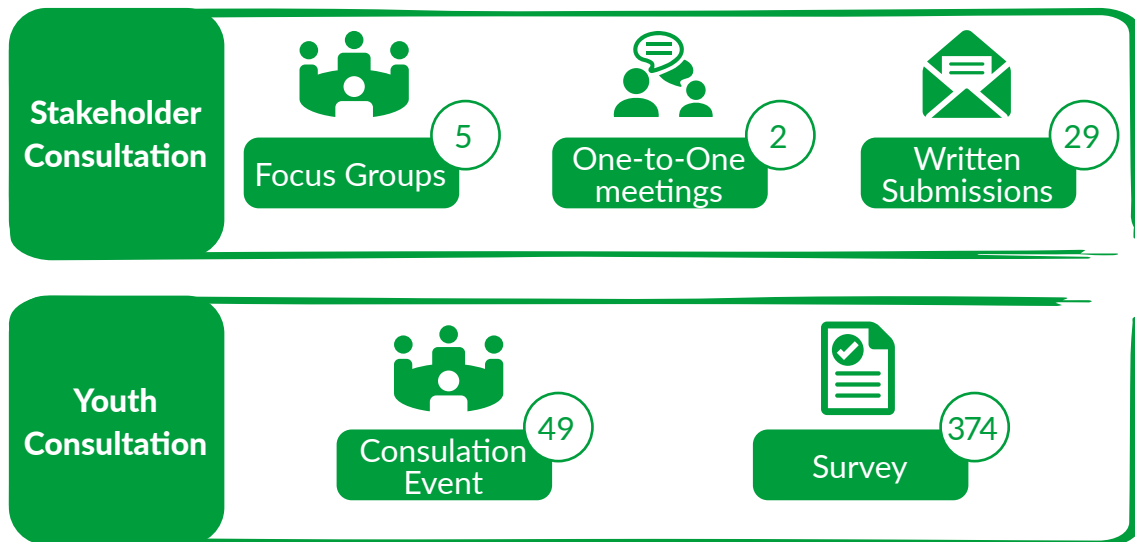
Phase 4: Development of the Five Year Development Plan for Comhairle na nÓg

The Five Year Development Plan was developed by bringing together all of the outputs from Phases 1-3 above. The plan sets out a clear vision and mission for Comhairle na nÓg for the next five years, one supported by a set of values that express the shared beliefs of the Comhairle na nÓg community and identifies what's important to them. The plan has identified five strategic goals, and a set of specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-based (SMART) objectives and supporting actions to deliver them.

The goals, objectives and actions are set out in detail in later sections.

Summary of consultation outputs

The consultation process for the development of the Five Year Development Plan was divided into two strands, as identified in Phases 2 and 3 of the overall strategic planning process.



The consultation process explored a number of themes relevant to Comhairle na nÓg, including:

- Structures and relationships
- Culture and communication
- Perception and reach
- Influence
- Training and supports
- Funding and resources
- Process, technology and data.

A summary of the key messages related to each of these themes is set out in Appendix 4.

Chapter 3: Vision, mission, values and strategic goals to 2025

Vision

The vision statement sets out where Comhairle na nÓg wants to go within the next five years.

Comhairle na nÓg is recognised locally and nationally as the go-to structure empowering young people of all backgrounds to speak up, be heard and influence decisions on matters that affect their lives.

Mission

The mission statement defines Comhairle na nÓg's core purpose.

Our mission is to be the permanent rights-based structure that represents the voice of young people in Ireland and provides them with a platform to meaningfully engage with decision-makers and influence matters that affect them.

Values

Values are the fundamental beliefs of an organisation. The guiding principles that dictate Comhairle na nÓg's behaviour, and help ensure that the organisation is on the right path and that our members are acting and living in accordance with our vision and mission, are outlined below.

1. **Welcoming and inclusive** – we foster a warm and inclusive culture so that young people of all backgrounds feel safe, secure and comfortable to be themselves.
2. **Proactive** – we positively engage with each other and those outside Comhairle na nÓg about the topics, issues and concerns that are important to young people.
3. **Collaborative** – we believe that if decision-makers and young people work together we can achieve our goals and make an impact at local and national level.
4. **Mutual respect** – we encourage mutual respect, consideration and understanding of each other and with those with whom we interact.
5. **Making a difference** – we work on behalf of young people to positively influence and effect change.
6. **Authentic** – we foster an environment of transparency that promotes openness, truthfulness and fairness for all. We are sincere and genuine in our desire to represent the interests of young people.
7. **Committed** – we are committed to promoting and safeguarding the voices of young people.
8. **Enjoyable** – we promote a cheerful, vibrant and positive environment that results in an enjoyable experience for all members.
9. **Visible and accountable** – we encourage accountability in decision-making, and believe that the voice of young people should be given meaningful, fair and visible consideration in decisions that affect their lives.

Strategic goals up to 2025

This plan identifies five broad strategic goals of equal significance. These are outlined below alongside the key themes. The themes have been reviewed by young Comhairle members, and their understanding of each one is included in italics under each heading.

| Theme | Goal |
|---|--|
| <p>Reach and influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This is how we will effect change</i> <i>How Comhairle will effect change</i> <i>How Comhairle will have a broad influence</i> | To extend our reach and engage more broadly with young people and decision-makers to strengthen the voice and influence of young people in local and national decision-making |
| <p>Operational delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This is how we will operate</i> <i>This is how we will run effectively</i> | To ensure that Comhairle na nÓg has the necessary resources, systems, processes and supports to operate effectively and to enable young people to have a say in issues and decisions that affect their lives |
| <p>Culture, recognition and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How Comhairle will communicate our message and promote inclusion and participation</i> <i>How we will communicate our values and ensure public understanding/awareness</i> <i>How we will ensure our message is heard</i> <i>How we will uphold our values and communicate our message</i> | To enhance the awareness, recognition and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg among all young people and to cultivate a culture of inclusion and participation in a diverse and vibrant Comhairle na nÓg community |

| Theme | Goal |
|---|--|
| <p>Structure and relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enhance the internal and external structures of Comhairle</i> • <i>Build and improve structures to help Comhairle reach its potential</i> • <i>Build and develop structures and relationships to ensure Comhairle is as effective as possible</i> • <i>Develop its structures so that it's effective nationwide</i> | <p>To strengthen and enhance the internal and external structures and relationships that underpin the work of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive, and build on these so that they are organised, coherent and effective – enabling them to truly reach their potential and ensure the voices of young people are heard</p> |
| <p>Evidence-based innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How we will ensure Comhairle is always improving</i> | <p>To build an evidence base that informs best practice, and actively seek new and innovative ways to develop and enhance Comhairle na nÓg</p> |

For each goal, a series of focused strategic objectives have been identified. Each objective is numbered, and supported by a set of tangible actions to help to achieve the overall objectives of the Five Year Development Plan.

The objectives for each strategic goal are outlined in the following pages, and the detailed actions associated with each objective can be found in Appendix 1.

The progress of the individual actions and overall objectives will be monitored and tracked in accordance with the governance framework set out in Chapter 4. A Cross-departmental Oversight Committee will be established (see Objective 4.3) to oversee and drive the implementation of this plan. A mid-term review of agreed KPIs will ensure that all actions are being progressed and will be delivered.

GOAL 1 – Reach and influence

GOAL 1 – Reach and influence

To extend our reach and engage more broadly with young people and decision-makers to strengthen the voice and influence of young people in local and national decision-making

| | |
|-----|--|
| 1.1 | We will seek to extend our reach to all young people by enhancing our approach to recruiting new Comhairle members in addition to exploring opportunities for other young people (non-members) to have a say in issues that affect their lives. |
| 1.2 | We will enhance the visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg in schools and other education settings, through greater commitment and support from the Department of Education and other education partners. |
| 1.3 | We will develop formal structures and pathways in conjunction with relevant groups at national and local level to facilitate the active recruitment of seldom-heard young people, and encourage their participation in Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive. |
| 1.4 | We will strengthen the collective voice of Comhairle na nÓg by encouraging the creation of alliances between Comhairlí to work together at a national level on issues of mutual interest or national importance. |
| 1.5 | We will continue to champion and further enhance the role of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive by actively seeking opportunities to connect these structures with Government, decision-makers, policy developers and others. |
| 1.6 | We will engage with adult decision-makers locally to ensure they are committed to seeking youth input through Comhairle na nÓg in a meaningful way. |
| 1.7 | We will embed Comhairle na nÓg in local communities through greater co-working with adult decision-making structures, the local political system and other local and regional organisations. |
| 1.8 | We will ensure that Comhairle na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg are the primary participation mechanism and starting point, at local and national level, for the development of new participation initiatives and structures relevant to emerging policy priorities identified by young people and decision-makers. |

GOAL 2 – Operational delivery

GOAL 2 – Operational delivery

To ensure that Comhairle na nÓg has the necessary resources, systems, processes and supports to operate effectively and to enable young people to have a say in issues and decisions that affect their lives

| | |
|-----|---|
| 2.1 | We will further enhance and develop our internal structures and processes where necessary to enable efficient and effective Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and National Executive operations. |
| 2.2 | We will guide and support Comhairle na nÓg members in successfully performing their roles. |
| 2.3 | We will engage with Comhairle members to understand their experience of Comhairle na nÓg and incorporate their voices into the design of Comhairle operations and the delivery of the Five Year Development Plan. |
| 2.4 | We will further develop the capacity and capability of people directly linked to the delivery of Comhairle na nÓg to ensure that they are fully equipped to successfully perform their roles. |
| 2.5 | We will ensure that Comhairle na nÓg is adequately funded and resourced to facilitate meaningful youth participation at local and national level. |
| 2.6 | We will incorporate the principles and tools included in the National Framework for Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making into our own ways of working and actively encourage its implementation among organisations with whom we interact and engage. |
| 2.7 | We will support adherence to all relevant legislation, including but not limited to, child safeguarding legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in the conduct of all Comhairle operations, particularly those relating to the recruitment of and communication with our members and other young people. |

GOAL 3 – Culture, recognition and communication

GOAL 3 – Culture, recognition and communication

To enhance the awareness, recognition and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg among all young people and to cultivate a culture of inclusion and participation in a diverse and vibrant Comhairle na nÓg community

| | |
|-----|--|
| 3.1 | We will develop the brand and profile of Comhairle na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg so that they are recognised as the principal consultation mechanisms for young people locally and nationally on topics and issues that affect their lives. |
| 3.2 | We will develop and implement a national communication plan to ensure visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive among young people. |
| 3.3 | We will develop and implement a national communication plan to ensure visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive among local and national decision-makers, parents, the general public and other adult stakeholders. |
| 3.4 | We will develop an internal communication plan to enhance communication and engagement between Comhairlí and across the broader Comhairle na nÓg community. |
| 3.5 | We will actively promote and maintain a culture that reflects the values of Comhairle na nÓg and is welcoming and inclusive for a diverse membership base, including seldom-heard young people. |

GOAL 4 – Structures and relationships

GOAL 4 – Structures and relationships

To strengthen and enhance the structures and relationships that underpin the work of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive, and build on these so that they are organised, coherent and effective – enabling them to reach their potential and ensure the voices of young people are heard

| | |
|-----|---|
| 4.1 | We will develop a National Participation Office to manage and coordinate the activities of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg, the National Executive and related youth participation initiatives and structures. |
| 4.2 | We will develop mechanisms to ensure cross-Government engagement with Dáil na nÓg and the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive. |
| 4.3 | We will ensure active cross-departmental engagement to drive the work of the National Participation Office and the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan. |
| 4.4 | We will further develop the local Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee structure and work with these groups and their members to enhance the effectiveness of Comhairle na nÓg in each local area. |
| 4.5 | We will allocate responsibility for proactive stakeholder engagement and relationship management to a national Comhairle na nÓg staff member based within the National Participation Office. |
| 4.6 | We will establish a series of networking groups that enable Local Authority Coordinators and Comhairle Coordinators to interact more frequently within a facilitated structure and to engage with their peers across counties. |
| 4.7 | We will develop local and national structures to maintain relationships with Comhairle alumni and provide opportunities and pathways for past members (18+) who have matured out of Comhairle na nÓg to remain connected to the work of their Comhairle. |
| 4.8 | We will build relationships with national and international bodies and funding programmes where opportunities exist for partnerships and collaborations to further the influence and success of Comhairle na nÓg both as a mechanism for youth voices and in relation to topics of importance to Comhairle members. |

GOAL 4 – Structures and relationships

To strengthen and enhance the structures and relationships that underpin the work of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive, and build on these so that they are organised, coherent and effective – enabling them to reach their potential and ensure the voices of young people are heard

| | |
|------------|--|
| 4.9 | We will work with the National Participation Office and the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee ¹ to formally consider the potential value of establishing a legislative basis for the Comhairle na nÓg local and national structures. |
|------------|--|

GOAL 5 – Evidenced-based innovation

GOAL 5 – Evidence-based innovation

To build an evidence base that informs best practice, and actively seek new and innovative ways to develop and enhance Comhairle na nÓg

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|------------|--|
| 5.1 | We will explore opportunities to provide children under the age of 12 with a voice on matters that affect their lives. |
| 5.2 | We will embed research, evidence-based innovations, and new ways of thinking and working in all elements of Comhairle operations. |
| 5.3 | We will explore new innovative models for online operations to be used in Comhairle na nÓg and invest in technology to enhance Comhairle operations and support new ways of working. |
| 5.4 | We will be informed by, and contribute to, emerging international trends, patterns and developments in youth participation and associated implementation structures and models. |
| 5.5 | We will harness national, European and international networking and information sharing opportunities to enable Comhairle na nÓg to share good practice and learn from the experience of other structures and countries. |
| 5.6 | We will continuously review, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg, the National Executive and other participation structures, as they develop over the life of this development plan and beyond, to ensure they continue to optimally support and enable Ireland’s children and young people to have their voices heard on matters that affect their lives. |

¹ The Cross-departmental Oversight Committee will identify the groups to be involved in this process

Chapter 4:

Governance and implementation

Governance framework

To ensure the successful delivery of the Five Year Development Plan, a governance framework has been developed to provide accountability, flexibility, and risk management and mitigation for the duration of the plan. These framework structures will also support the overall implementation of the plan in a manner that is consistent with its original goals and objectives.

The governance framework set out in this document is based on good practice in public sector governance, and deals with aspects including:

- accountability – being answerable for decisions and having meaningful mechanisms in place to ensure the delivery of the mandate;
- transparency/openness – having clear roles and responsibilities and clear mechanisms for making decisions;
- integrity – acting impartially, ethically and in the interests of Comhairle na nÓg, and not misusing information acquired through a position of trust;
- stewardship – using every opportunity to enhance the value of the Comhairle na nÓg;
- efficiency – ensuring the best use of resources to further the aims of Comhairle na nÓg, with a commitment to evidence-based strategies for improvement; and
- leadership – achieving a commitment to good governance through leadership from the top.

This governance structure is based on:

- senior level sponsorship;
- the representation of key individuals/stakeholders;
- clear roles and responsibilities;
- a clear scope; and
- strong communication.

Underpinning the governance framework

The Five Year Development Plan has been developed by DCEDIY and reflects the vision and principles of the national participation framework. The framework's vision is "participation with a purpose". This takes both the purpose of the organisation and the purpose of involving children and young people in decision-making into account. It means that when children and young people are involved in decision-making, their views are listened to, taken seriously, given due weight and have the potential to lead to an outcome or change.²¹ The key principles of the national participation framework permeate and underpin the strategic goals, objectives and actions included in the Five Year Development Plan.

The successful implementation of this plan requires significant collaboration and engagement between a number of Government departments, state agencies and non-governmental organisations. To achieve the ambitious goals set out in this plan, the solid foundations developed so far must be built on so that Comhairle na nÓg's potential can be realised.

In order to facilitate this implementation, a specific Comhairle na nÓg governance framework has been designed to support the relationships between the Comhairlí, DCEDIY, the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee, the National Participation Office and Local Authorities.

Governance structure for the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan for Comhairle na nÓg (CNN)



The role of each group supporting Comhairle na nÓg in this governance framework is outlined below.

| Group | Responsibility |
|---|--|
| DCEDIY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Participation Unit of DCEDIY is responsible for funding, supporting and developing CNN. • DCEDIY is responsible for securing and administrating, through Pobal, the CNN Development Fund. • DCEDIY is responsible for convening and supporting the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee. • DCEDIY staff will directly oversee and support the work of the National Participation Office. • DCEDIY has specific implementation actions under the Five Year Development Plan. |
| Cross-departmental Oversight Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cross-departmental Oversight Committee will comprise Comhairle members and representatives from the following core departments and organisations: DCEDIY, the Department of Education, the Department of Housing and Local Government, the Department of Community and Rural Development, Local Authorities. Representatives from other departments/organisations will be invited to attend or join the Committee, as required. • The members of this committee will represent their departments and organisations when championing the work of CNN, they will oversee the implementation of this plan, monitor the results and insist on corrective measures where they are required. • The Committee sets the agenda for the National Participation Office's work on the operational implementation of this plan. • The Committee should meet on a quarterly basis and review a short progress report against the actions set out in the plan from the National Participation Office. |

| Group | Responsibility |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| National Participation Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Participation Office will be established by DCEDIY, and will operate under the guidance and oversight of the department. • The National Participation Office will oversee and implement this plan, will monitor and report on progress, and report to the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee on progress and challenges. • Staff from the DCEDIY Participation Unit will direct and support the work of the National Participation Office. • The National Participation Office Manager is responsible for overall management. • The Manager will be formally responsible for stakeholder engagement. This will be a considerable component of the role and will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ensuring that structures and relationships with external stakeholders are formalised and preserved (at both national and local level); › ensuring the operation and development of CNN at local level is not dependent on individual champions (through the development and implementation of agreed processes, guidance, resources and monitoring arrangements); › clearly defining and communicating the role of all stakeholders (both internally and externally); › acting as the national link between external stakeholders and CNN; › coordinating the embedding of CNN with other organisations (Local Authorities, CYPSCs, LCDCs, PPNs); |

| Group | Responsibility |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| National Participation Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ developing a toolkit for Comhairle Coordinators on stakeholder engagement in their local Comhairlí; ➤ promoting the CNN's structures and its work; ➤ regularly informing, updating and consulting staff from the Department's Participation Unit on issues/developments that arise; and ➤ periodically reporting to the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee on progress made and challenges experienced (including relationships with key stakeholders). |
| Participation Officers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Participation Officers will provide support, advice and training for Comhairle Coordinators and support DCEDIY in overseeing Comhairle operations and the expenditure of the CNN Development Fund administered by Pobal. • They will report to the National Participation Office. |
| Local Authorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities are crucial to the existence of CNN and the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan. • Each Local Authority is responsible for the appointment of a lead contact person to oversee the use of, and report on, the CNN Development Fund. • The Local Authority will also appoint a CNN Coordinator to run CNN locally (including recruitment, training and ongoing support). • Each Local Authority is required to establish a CNN Steering Committee to support the work of their local Comhairle. The Steering Committee will meet a minimum number of times. This is a requirement of the DCEDIY funding scheme administered by Pobal. • Local Authorities are responsible for embedding CNN in local decision-making processes that are relevant to the lives of young people in the area. |

| Group | Responsibility |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Comhairle Coordinators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Comhairle Coordinators are appointed by Local Authorities to support each Comhairle. They may be the Local Authority lead for CNN or be retained by the Local Authority to organise and run CNN. • They report both to their Local Authority and to the CNN National Participation Office. This ensures that they have access to the relevant National Participation Office support structures and can bring a level of consistency to the work of the Coordinators. • Comhairle Coordinators are required to liaise with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that Comhairle is given due weight in decision-making processes. • Comhairle Coordinators are responsible for convening and supporting their local Comhairle. Accessing funding and reporting on progress remains the responsibility of the named Comhairle lead in each Local Authority. |
| Comhairle Steering Committees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Local Authority is required to establish a CNN Steering Committee to support the work of their local Comhairle by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ providing advice and support to the Local Authority, the Coordinator and members of CNN regarding the work plan and active participation in decision-making processes; ➤ linking Comhairlí with local organisations and policy-makers; and ➤ formally communicating their planned local developments to the National Participation Office. |

Formal terms of reference will be established and a formal meeting or reporting cycle will be put in place for each element in the governance framework.

This governance framework should be reviewed and re-examined on an annual basis to ensure its effectiveness.

Project management system

A project management system will allow the National Participation Office to manage the ambitious work programme set out in this plan. It will facilitate the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee and the National Participation Office's monitoring and oversight of the work to be done within the framework.

Appendix 1: Actions in the Five Year Development Plan

GOAL 1 – Reach and influence

GOAL 1 – Reach and influence

To extend our reach and engage more broadly with young people and decision-makers to strengthen the voice and influence of young people in local and national decision-making

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.1 | We will seek to extend our reach to all young people by enhancing our approach to recruiting new Comhairle members in addition to exploring opportunities for other young people (non-members) to have a say in issues that affect their lives. | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.1 | Broaden the current recruitment mechanisms for new Comhairle members beyond the current traditional channels, and introduce new and innovative approaches to ensure a broad and diverse membership base that is representative of all young people. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.1.2 | Develop a recruitment policy that provides guidance on the appropriate methods of election and entry to CNN that can be consistently and fairly applied across Comhairlí. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | |
| 1.1.3 | Explore the development of a database of young people who are not Comhairle members but would like to participate in consultations relevant to them. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.1.4 | Maintain and develop the current relationships between CNN and the youth sector, in order to sustain the support they provide and preserve the local membership and recruitment avenues they facilitate. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators, local youth services | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|--|--|--|--|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | | | | |
| 1.2 | We will enhance the visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg in schools and other education settings, through greater commitment and support from the Department of Education and other education partners. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.1 | Evaluate, on an ongoing basis, the issuance of guidance on how CNN can and should be supported by schools. | Department of Education | National Participation Office, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators, Participation Team, schools | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | |
| 1.2.2 | Evaluate, on an ongoing basis, the process followed by schools participating in CNN, with a view to simplifying the process and reducing the time required for principals to spend on processing paperwork. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinator, Participation Team, schools | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | |
| 1.2.3 | Enhance links and relationships with schools at a local level on an ongoing basis, to encourage participation in CNN and the nomination of a diverse pool of members. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinator, Participation Team, schools | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.2.4 | Provide guidance and information on an ongoing basis to schools and other relevant education bodies (e.g., ETBs, NAPD, Principals and Deputy Principals' Association (PDA) etc.) on the role, purpose and importance of CNN in local communities. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | | ● | | ● |
| 1.2.5 | Establish a badge of honour / recognition process that can be rolled out at a local level to acknowledge and reward the commitment and contribution of schools to their Comhairle and to demonstrate that these schools are promoting the voice of young people. | National Participation Office | Participation Team | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.3 | We will develop formal structures and pathways in conjunction with relevant groups at national and local level to facilitate the active recruitment of seldom-heard young people, and encourage their participation in Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive. | | | | | | | |
| 1.3.1 | Identify current examples of good practice in the recruitment and inclusion of seldom-heard young people in local Comhairlí and seek to replicate these elsewhere. | National Participation Office | Participation Team and CNN Coordinators | ● | | | | |
| 1.3.2 | Work in conjunction with relevant representative groups and bodies at a national and local level to develop formal structures and pathways into CNN for seldom-heard young people. The engagement of such groups and the development of these structures will take place sequentially, starting with Disability and Traveller groups. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, representative groups for seldom-heard young people | ● | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.3.3 | Roll out guidance to all CNN Coordinators on how to effectively engage with seldom-heard young people. | National Participation Office | Participation Team and CNN Coordinators | ● | | | | |
| 1.3.4 | Where funding permits, put relevant supports in place to enable increased membership and participation levels of seldom-heard young people (e.g. literacy support, access to technology where appropriate, transport support, etc.) | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.3.5 | Design and implement appropriate mechanisms to capture data and information on the representation of seldom-heard young people in CNN, with a view to informing CNN policy and developing pathways for seldom-heard groups. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.3.6 | Monitor the representation of seldom-heard young people on an ongoing basis and report back to the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|---|-------------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.4 | We will strengthen the collective voice of Comhairle na nÓg by encouraging the creation of alliances between Comhairlí to work together at a national level on issues of mutual interest or national importance. | | | | | | | |
| 1.4.1 | Monitor political developments, national priorities, and proposed changes to policy and legislation, and ensure there is meaningful engagement with CNN as part of any consultation or decision-making process. | National Participation Office | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.4.2 | Publicise the topics being addressed by individual Comhairlí so that common interests and pursuits can be identified and opportunities for alliances and partnerships can be recognised. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.4.3 | Create regional clusters of Comhairlí where decisions/developments are likely to affect more than one Comhairle in the region, so that multiple Comhairlí can work together in that region to influence these decisions. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.4.4 | Share the successes and achievements of individual Comhairlí so that they can learn from each other and successes in one Comhairle can be replicated in another. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.5 | We will continue to champion and further enhance the role of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive by actively seeking opportunities to connect these structures with Government, decision-makers, policy developers and others. | | | | | | | |
| 1.5.1 | Provide guidance and support to national policy-makers, groups and organisations to support them to successfully consult and engage with CNN on decision-making that affects young people’s lives, in line with their international human rights and national participation policy obligations. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators, Participation Team | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.5.2 | The National Participation Office will identify and target the priority national stakeholder groups with whom relationships will be developed over the life of this development plan. This exercise will be done in partnership with DCEDIY. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.5.3 | The Department will work with other relevant Government departments to gain their commitment to including CNN in their consultation and decision-making processes and ensuring representation for CNN in all relevant and appropriate policy groups. | DCEDIY | Other relevant Government departments | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.5.4 | The Department will continue to champion the development of CNN, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive by actively seeking opportunities to connect these structures with decision-makers, policy developers and other political structures at national level. | DCEDIY | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.5.5 | Work with national decision-making structures to develop an annual national consultation plan / calendar of events to ensure CNN can provide meaningful input in a timely manner for all decisions that affect the lives of young people. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY, other relevant Government departments and agencies | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.6 | We will engage with adult decision-makers locally to ensure they are committed to seeking youth input through Comhairle na nÓg in a meaningful way. | | | | | | | |
| 1.6.1 | Provide guidance and support to local policy-makers, groups and organisations to support them to successfully consult and engage with CNN on decision-making that affects young people's lives, in line with their international human rights and national participation policy obligations. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators, Participation Team | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.6.2 | Participation Officers will work closely with Comhairlí to design strategies and develop capabilities to enhance the engagement of individual Comhairlí with stakeholders in their local areas. | National Participation Office | CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.6.3 | Work with local organisations and bodies (such as Local Authorities, PPNs, LCDCs, etc.) to develop an annual local consultation plan / calendar of events to ensure CNN can provide meaningful input in a timely manner for all decisions that affect the lives of young people. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority, CNN Coordinators, LCDCs, PPNs | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.6.4 | CNN will be the mechanism for consultation on the forthcoming Local Economic and Community Plan (commencing in 2021). | Local Authorities | National Participation Office, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators, LCDCs | ● | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|---|------------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.7 | We will embed Comhairle na nÓg in local communities through greater co-working with adult decision-making structures, the local political system and other local and regional organisations. | | | | | | | |
| 1.7.1 | Each Comhairle will seek appropriate opportunities to present their organisation to local stakeholders to reaffirm the importance of CNN in their Local Authority area. | CNN Coordinators | National Participation Office, Local Authority, and Participation Team, PPNs, LCDCs | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.7.2 | Work with the Department to design one or two key annual initiatives or events, aimed at promoting the work of the Comhairlí to a broad and diverse range of stakeholders in their localities. These designs will be disseminated to each individual Comhairle, so they can engage with local decision-makers in a uniform way. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.7.3 | Maintain lists of local adult decision-making structures, members of the local political system and other local and regional organisations and develop a contact letter template. | CNN Coordinators | National Participation Office and Local Authority | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.7.4 | Provide trainings for CNN Coordinators on how to engage with these structures following initial contact. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.7.5 | Establish initial contact with the relevant organisations and people and engage with them on a periodic basis to inform them of the work of the Comhairle, discuss their priorities and relate those back to the young people in the Comhairle. | CNN Coordinators | Local Authority | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.7.6 | Engage local politicians by inviting them to speak at Comhairle meetings or contribute to Comhairle topics in order to build relationships between Comhairlí and their local political systems. | CNN Coordinators | National Participation Office | | | | | |
| 1.7.7 | Organise formal engagements between CNN and Local Authorities, LCDCs and PPNs for the purposes of policy-making on an ongoing basis. | National Participation Office | Local Authorities, LCDCs, PPNs, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.7.8 | The National Participation Office will be represented in the National Advisory Group for PPNs. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY, Department of Rural and Community Development, Local Authorities, PPNs | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|----------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.8 | We will ensure that Comhairle na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg are the primary participation mechanism and starting point, at local and national level, for the development of new participation initiatives and structures relevant to emerging policy priorities identified by young people and decision-makers. | | | | | | | |
| 1.8.1 | Establish a task group of decision-makers and children / young people for each identified policy area to propose an appropriate design process for any new proposed participation structures (building on CNN as a baseline structure). | DCEDIY | National Participation Office, Hub na nÓg | | | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|---------------------------------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 1.8.2 | Design and establish a national Rural Youth Assembly (building on CNN as a baseline structure). | DCEDIY, National Participation Office | Local Authorities, Department of Community and Rural Development | | ● | | | |
| 1.8.3 | Design and establish a Youth Climate Council/ Assembly (building on CNN as a baseline structure). | DCEDIY | Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the Department of the Taoiseach | | | ● | | |

GOAL 2 – Operational delivery

GOAL 2 – Operational Delivery

To ensure that Comhairle na nÓg has the necessary resources, systems, processes and supports to operate effectively and to enable young people to have a say in issues and decisions that affect their lives.

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|--|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | |
| 2.1 | We will further enhance and develop our internal structures and processes where necessary to enable efficient and effective Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and National Executive operations. | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1.1 | Maintain the successful operation of CNN, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive, and facilitate development as appropriate in line with best practice in youth participation. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office, CNN Steering Committees, Local Authorities | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 2.1.2 | Continue to support and enable the provision of successful Comhairle events for young people at local and national level. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 2.1.3 | Review the CNN Toolkit in line with organisational developments and the National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making to ensure it remains valid and continues to meet the needs of Comhairlí. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.1.4 | Develop and roll out common processes and procedures that support the effective functioning of all Comhairlí, encouraging standardisation where appropriate yet allowing for elements of local flexibility as required. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | |
| 2.1.5 | Develop specific guidance and protocols to support the effective operation of CNN in the context of COVID-19 (and post COVID-19), ensuring in-built flexibility so that Comhairlí can respond to changes as required during these uncertain times. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | | | | |
| 2.1.6 | Enable Comhairle members to support and contribute to the work of the National Participation Office and Participation Team by engaging them in projects focused on improving internal Comhairle operations. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.2 | We will guide and support Comhairle na nÓg members in successfully performing their roles. | | | | | | | |
| 2.2.1 | Develop a standard induction process to support new members joining CNN and to ensure they are fully equipped to deliver their roles. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | | | | |
| 2.2.2 | Provide training to Coordinators to support all members in optimally performing their roles, with a particular focus on any additional supports that may be required for seldom-heard young people. | National Participation Office | Participation Team | | ● | | | |
| 2.2.3 | Further explore the issue of transportation for members to ensure that there are sufficient transport options available to allow members to successfully perform their roles. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.2.4 | Gather feedback on the outcomes of all consultations in which Comhairlí have participated at local and national level and communicate it to Comhairle members. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.3 | We will engage with Comhairle members to understand their experience of Comhairle na nÓg and incorporate their voices into the design of Comhairle operations and delivery of the Five Year Development Plan. | | | | | | | |
| 2.3.1 | Help Comhairle members to contribute to the development of the annual Comhairle work plan to ensure the agenda and work of CNN is shaped and led by young people. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.3.2 | Review the youth consultation report developed as part of the strategic planning process, consider the key challenges identified by young people, and put measures in place to address these. | National Participation Office | | ● | ● | | | |
| 2.3.3 | Develop a local stakeholder engagement plan and identify a list of stakeholders to target for relationship development purposes. | National Participation Office | Local Authority, CNN Coordinators and Comhairle members | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 2.3.4 | Run an annual anonymised survey of existing Comhairle members to obtain member feedback on their satisfaction with CNN, assess their commitment levels and identify any issues they may have that could potentially lead to early departures. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.3.5 | Monitor and report on retention levels across all Comhairlí and communicate this to all Comhairlí. | National Participation Office | CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | |
| 2.3.6 | Engage with recent early leavers of CNN to determine the reasons for their departure. | CNN Coordinators | Participation Team, Local Authority and National Participation Office | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 2.3.7 | Identify and implement a set of retention measures and initiatives to address early departures from Comhairlí. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|---|-------------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.4 | We will further develop the capacity and capability of people directly linked to the delivery of Comhairle na nÓg to ensure that they are fully equipped to successfully perform their roles. | | | | | | | |
| 2.4.1 | <p>Develop a suite of standard guidance and information documents, tailored to the needs of various external stakeholders (e.g. Local Authority Coordinators, local councillors and decision-makers, state agencies, Government departments, etc.) and providing information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their obligations in relation to the UNCRC and the rights of children and young people; • the importance of youth participation; • youth participation structures in Ireland overall; • the National Framework for Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making; • the role of CNN and how to initiate the engagement process; and • how to effectively engage with young people. | National Participation Office | | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.4.2 | <p>Develop and roll out a standard suite of trainings for all Participation Officers and CNN Coordinators (including induction training for any new recruits), to ensure they can perform their roles effectively. This should cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standard Comhairle processes, especially where updates have been made in line with this development plan; • the Lundy Model of Participation; • the National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making; • effective youth consultation techniques; • the use of technologies to support virtual participation (e.g. Zoom); • child safeguarding procedures; and • the GDPR. | National Participation Office | Participation Team and CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.4.3 | <p>Provide training or guidance to all CNN Steering Committee members to ensure they can perform their roles effectively. This should cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the requirements of their role; • how to engage with stakeholders and create links with CNN; • the use of technologies to enable virtual participation in Steering Committee meetings (e.g. Zoom); • the National Framework for Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making; • child safeguarding procedures; and • the GDPR. | National Participation Office | CNN Steering Committees | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|--|----------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.5 | We will ensure that Comhairle na nÓg is adequately funded and resourced to facilitate meaningful youth participation at local and national level. | | | | | | | |
| 2.5.1 | Review the current funding and resourcing model for CNN and consider whether the current Development Fund allocations meet the needs of the Comhairlí. If necessary, put forward a business case to the Department, who will in turn engage with the Government to secure adequate funding for the roll out of this plan and the ongoing operation of CNN. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office, Steering Committee | ● | | | | |
| 2.5.2 | Structure the funding allocation to support one-off initiatives that individual Comhairlí can apply for based on their local needs. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office, Pobal | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|---------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.5.3 | Develop a membership fund on a “needs must” basis for young people, to remove barriers to participation in relation to transport, technology, and rural and island areas. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY, Pobal | | ● | | | |
| 2.5.4 | Put standard budget management and reporting processes in place across all Comhairlí. | National Participation Office | Pobal | | ● | | | |
| 2.5.5 | Develop a checklist and guidance for all Comhairlí on the audit/ inspection process to ensure Coordinators understand the requirements and maintain the relevant information and records. | National Participation Office | Pobal | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.5.6 | Further develop and enhance the mechanisms aimed at supporting CNN's role in national consultation, to enable it to be the primary participation mechanism for young people at national level. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.6 | We will incorporate the principles and tools included in the National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making into our own ways of working and actively encourage its implementation among organisations with whom we interact and engage. | | | | | | | |
| 2.6.1 | Continue to actively advocate for the rights of children and young people to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives through engagement with Government, policy-makers, decision-makers and service providers at a local and national level. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 2.6.2 | Reiterate and embed the good practice principles for engaging with children and young people in decision-making, participation framework checklists and implementation tools in any guidance documents and training content developed for our stakeholder audience. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|--|--|--|--|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | | | | |
| 2.7 | We will support adherence to all relevant legislation, including but not limited to, child safeguarding legislation and the GDPR, in the conduct of all Comhairle operations, particularly those relating to the recruitment of and communication with our members and other young people. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.7.1 | Support adherence to all relevant legislation by ensuring it is covered and addressed as part of any induction or ongoing training developed for CNN stakeholders who engage with Comhairlí as part of their work. Check, review and revise induction and training materials on a regular basis. | National Participation Office | Participation Team | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | |

GOAL 3 – Culture, recognition and communication

GOAL 3 – Culture, recognition and communication

To enhance the awareness, recognition and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg among all young people and to cultivate a culture of inclusion and participation in a diverse and vibrant Comhairle na nÓg community.

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.1 | We will develop the brand and profile of Comhairle na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg so that they are recognised as the principal consultation mechanisms for young people locally and nationally on topics and issues that affect their lives. | | | | | | | |
| 3.1.1 | Review, revise and relaunch the CNN brand and name to communicate its vision, mission and values and to enhance its image among young people. As part of this process, undertake a consultation process to assess the recognition, meaning and relevance of the CNN brand across a broad range of stakeholders. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | | | ● | | |
| 3.1.2 | As part of the brand review process, consider the name of CNN and whether it is appropriate for use in the future. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | | ● | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.1.3 | Develop guidance setting out the role of CNN to be issued to both national and local policy- and decision-makers. Provide contact information for the local Comhairle Coordinator / Participation Officer to facilitate contact and relationship development. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | | ● | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.2 | We will develop and implement a national communication plan to ensure visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive among young people. | | | | | | | |
| 3.2.1 | Enhance the presence of CNN on the social media platforms that are most popular among young people, and empower Comhairle members to use CNN social media accounts to share information and updates that are relevant to the work of individual Comhairlí. | Comhairle members | National Participation Office, CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.2.2 | As part of the communication plan, devise a series of strategic initiatives to ensure that the CNN brand is recognised and understood by seldom-heard young people and any bodies/ organisations/charities that represent these groups. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | | ● | | |
| 3.2.3 | As part of the communication plan, develop and implement a broad range of awareness campaigns aimed at young people to enhance their recognition of the CNN brand and their understanding of its role, the role of Dáil na nÓg and the role of the National Executive. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.3 | We will develop and implement a national communication plan to ensure visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive among local and national decision-makers, parents, the general public and other adult stakeholders. | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.1 | As part of the communication plan, develop and implement a broad range of awareness campaigns aimed at external adult stakeholders to enhance their recognition of the CNN brand and their understanding of its role, the role of Dáil na nÓg and the role of the National Executive. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | | ● | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|--|----------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.4 | We will develop an internal communication plan to enhance communication and engagement between Comhairlí and across the broader Comhairle community. | | | | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.4.1 | Develop an internal communication mechanism that facilitates communication and information sharing between Comhairlí. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | | | |
| 3.4.2 | Develop an internal model for providing communication updates from the National Participation Office to each individual Comhairle (via each Coordinator). This should include general updates relevant to Comhairle operations and updates on broader policy matters and local or national developments of interest. | National Participation Office | Participation Team and CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.4.3 | Prepare a national CNN social media policy that can be rolled out consistently across all Comhairlí, and provide training to Coordinators on how to optimally utilise social media within their Comhairle. | National Participation Office | Participation Team | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.5 | We will actively promote and maintain a culture that reflects the values of Comhairle na nÓg and is welcoming and inclusive for a diverse membership base, including seldom-heard young people. | | | | | | | |
| 3.5.1 | Ensure the standard induction process for new members of CNN, and all other ongoing trainings provided to members and internal stakeholders, communicates the values of CNN and how these should be embodied in the behaviours of members during their time in CNN. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 3.5.2 | Design and develop (at national level) an interactive CNN culture and values workshop that can be rolled out locally by CNN Coordinators. Train CNN Coordinators on the facilitation and delivery of this workshop. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | |
| 3.5.3 | Design and develop a range of posters and other relevant merchandise (e.g. T-shirts, pop-up signage, etc.) to be used at relevant meetings and events that present CNN values, and support embedding these in the CNN culture. | National Participation Office | CNN Coordinators | | | ● | | |
| 3.5.4 | Ensure all Comhairle communications aimed at both internal and external stakeholders include the CNN values. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | | ● | | |

GOAL 4 – Structures and relationships

GOAL 4 – Structures and relationships

To strengthen and enhance the structures and relationships that underpin the work of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the National Executive, and build on these so that they are organised, coherent and effective – enabling them to reach their potential and ensure the voices of young people are heard

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|---|----------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.1 | We will develop a National Participation Office to manage and coordinate the activities of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg, the National Executive and related youth participation initiatives and structures. | | | | | | | |
| 4.1.1 | Define a detailed specification for the National Participation Office including its role, resourcing, structures, the budget and reporting lines. The National Participation Office's role is to drive the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan and to coordinate all participation initiatives and structures at a national level. | DCEDIY | | ● | | | | |
| 4.1.2 | Secure sign off from the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee (see 4.3) for the detailed specification (see 4.1.1). | DCEDIY | Cross-departmental Oversight Committee | ● | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|----------------|-------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.1.3 | Recruit and/or reassign staff to form the team and establish the National Participation Office as a virtual structure. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office | ● | ● | | | |
| 4.1.4 | Communicate the role of the National Participation Office to all stakeholders, Comhairlí and Comhairle members. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office | ● | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.2 | We will develop mechanisms to ensure cross-Government engagement with Dáil na nÓg and the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive. | | | | | | | |
| 4.2.1 | Identify and engage with relevant cross-departmental groups and mechanisms in order to further progress the work of the National Executive and Dáil na nÓg and ensure their continued impact on the political and policy-making process. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 4.2.2 | Support the National Participation Office to achieve buy-in and commitment from other Government departments to engage with Dáil na nÓg and the CNN National Executive. | DCEDIY | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|--|----------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.3 | We will ensure active cross-departmental engagement to drive the work of the National Participation Office and the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan. | | | | | | | |
| 4.3.1 | Set up a Cross-departmental Oversight Committee comprising representatives from DCEDIY, the Department of Education, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Department of Rural and Community Development to oversee the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan. | DCEDIY | Department of Education, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Department of Rural and Community Development | ● | | | | |
| 4.3.2 | Define formal terms of reference for this committee, a schedule of meetings and an oversight framework. | DCEDIY | | ● | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|--|------------------------------------|---|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.4 | We will further develop the local Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee structure, and leverage these groups and their members to enhance the effectiveness of Comhairle na nÓg within each local area. | | | | | | | |
| 4.4.1 | Standardise the structure of the CNN Steering Committees and their operating mechanisms to ensure they function consistently across all Comhairlí. | National Participation Office | Local Authorities, CNN Coordinators, and relevant local partners, e.g. CYPSCs, PPNs, etc. | | ● | | | |
| 4.4.2 | Roll out the mechanisms and supports identified in 4.4.1 to each CNN Steering Committee. | National Participation Office | Individual CNN Steering Committees | | ● | | | |
| 4.4.3 | Agree commitments with Steering Committee members on how they will link up with local organisations and policy-makers. | Individual CNN Steering Committees | | | ● | | | |
| 4.4.4 | Formally communicate planned local developments to the National Participation Office. | Individual CNN Steering Committees | National Participation Office | | ● | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | | |
|------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|--|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | |
| 4.5 | We will allocate responsibility for proactive stakeholder engagement and relationship management to a national Comhairle na nÓg staff member based within the National Participation Office. | | | | | | | | |
| 4.5.1 | Formally define the approach to stakeholder engagement at national and local level. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | ● | ● | | | | |
| 4.5.2 | Develop a stakeholder engagement policy for the Five Year Development Plan. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | ● | | | | | |
| 4.5.3 | Communicate the stakeholder engagement policy to all Comhairlí and key stakeholder groups. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|--|--|--|--|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | | | | |
| 4.6 | We will establish a series of networking groups that enable Local Authority Coordinators and Comhairle Coordinators to interact more frequently within a facilitated structure and to engage with their peers across counties. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.6.1 | Establish a number of networks to facilitate cross-organisational engagement and information sharing, schedule network meetings at least twice per annum, and maintain a membership list/directory for each network. The list/directory should include, but may not be limited to, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | |
| 4.6.2 | Support the operation of these networks (see 4.6.1) as required. | National Participation Office | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.7 | We will develop local and national structures to maintain relationships with Comhairle alumni, and provide opportunities and pathways for past members (18+) who have matured out of Comhairle na nÓg to remain connected to the work of their Comhairle. | | | | | | | |
| 4.7.1 | Develop a database of alumni. All current members will be contacted as they leave CNN, informed of the database's purpose and asked if they would like to be recorded in it. Former members will also be contacted. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 4.7.2 | On a periodic basis these CNN alumni may be contacted by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a local Comhairle Coordinator (so they can share their experience of the Comhairle they were previously a member of); ● the National Participation Office (to give them updates on the activities and achievements of CNN in an annual eNewsletter). | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|---|----------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.8 | We will build relationships with national and international bodies and funding programmes where opportunities exist for partnerships and collaborations to further the influence and success of Comhairle na nÓg both as a mechanism for youth voices and in relation to topics of importance to Comhairle members. | | | | | | | |
| 4.8.1 | The Participation Unit in the Department will identify and engage with youth participation bodies in other countries to identify synergies and opportunities for collaboration and partnership. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office, Comhairlí | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 4.8.2 | The Participation Unit will promote the potential of the Erasmus+ funding programme to CNN and help local CNN Coordinators to access it. | DCEDIY | CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.8.3 | The Participation Unit will improve collaboration with the EU Youth Dialogue, by sitting on/chairing an EU Youth Dialogue National Working Group, to maximise the opportunity for matters of relevance to young people in Ireland to have an influence at EU level. | DCEDIY | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 4.8.4 | Develop a network of national structures involved in youth participation to maximise synergies and influence. | National Participation Office | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 4.8.5 | The Participation Unit will keep abreast of funding programmes available nationally and internationally that may align with the work of the CNN. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|----------------|-------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.8.6 | The Participation Unit will identify (a) representative(s) to participate in and represent Ireland in relevant EU/ international youth participation fora. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 4.9 | We will work with the National Participation Office and the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee ² to formally consider the potential value of establishing a legislative basis for the Comhairle na nÓg local and national structures. | | | | | | | |
| 4.9.1 | Develop a paper on establishing a legislative basis for CNN local and national structures to present to the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee. An exploration of specific legislative options for CNN, as well as of the potential for amending or adding to existing legislation for LCDCs or PPNs, should be included in this process. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | | ● | | | |
| 4.9.2 | Provide resources and support as necessary to the National Participation Office to enable the development of the paper (see 4.9.1). | DCEDIY | | | ● | | | |

² The Cross-departmental Oversight Committee will identify the groups to be involved in this process

GOAL 5 – Evidence-based innovation

GOAL 5 – Evidence-based innovation

To build an evidence base that informs best practice, and actively seek new and innovative ways to develop and enhance Comhairle na nÓg

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 5.1 | We will explore opportunities to provide children under the age of 12 with a voice on matters that affect their lives. | | | | | | | |
| 5.1.1 | Commission a research paper that explores potential participation arrangements for children under 12, with a focus on best practice and investigating how this is addressed in other international jurisdictions. | Hub na nÓg | DCEDIY, National Participation Office | | | ● | | |
| 5.1.2 | Undertake a consultation process with key stakeholders who work with children under 12 (e.g. CYPSCs, etc.) to explore opportunities and identify options for enabling their participation. | Hub na nÓg | DCEDIY, National Participation Office | | | ● | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 5.2 | We will embed research, evidence-based innovations, and new ways of thinking and working in all elements of Comhairle operations. | | | | | | | |
| 5.2.1 | Enhance the quality of data, and the mechanisms for gathering this data, in order to support research and develop an evidence base that enables innovation and further improves the work of CNN. | National Participation Office | Hub na nÓg, Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | |
| 5.2.2 | Develop and roll out a hybrid model of engagement that includes a combination of face-to-face and virtual meetings. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | | | | |
| 5.2.3 | In line with the internal communications plan, develop mechanisms to celebrate and publicise innovative approaches taken by individual Comhairlí and encourage their replication to develop better ways of working across CNN. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 5.3 | We will explore new innovative models for online operations to be used in Comhairle na nÓg and invest in technology to enhance Comhairle operations and support new ways of working. | | | | | | | |
| 5.3.1 | Work with individual Comhairlí to explore new, innovative, online models for working, in order to enhance future Comhairle operations. | National Participation Office | Hub na nÓg, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | | | | |
| 5.3.2 | Ensure all CNN Coordinators and Participation Officers have access to the necessary technologies to successfully perform their roles. | National Participation Office | Participation Team, Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | ● | | | | |
| 5.3.3 | Invest in systems to facilitate effective communication within and between the CNN community, where funding permits. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office and individual CNN Steering Committees | | | ● | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 5.3.4 | Support Comhairle members' access to technologies that enable virtual participation where appropriate, and where funding permits. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | ● | | | |
| 5.3.5 | In line with the communications plan (developed in consultation with Comhairle members), maintain and manage national CNN social media accounts on the platforms most utilised by children and young people (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok). | National Participation Office | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 5.3.6 | Develop the CNN website to include an international section. | National Participation Office | | | | ● | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | | |
|------------|--|----------------|-------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|--|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | |
| 5.4 | We will be informed by, and contribute to, emerging international trends, patterns and developments in youth participation and associated implementation structures and models. | | | | | | | | |
| 5.4.1 | Monitor international trends, patterns, developments and emerging best practices in youth participation through ongoing research, attending relevant conferences and events, etc. Formally communicate any new trends or developments to the National Participation Office and the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee. | Hub na nÓg | DCEDIY | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 5.4.2 | Evaluate CNN and its associated participation structures in light of international developments on a biennial basis, and, where relevant, work with the National Participation Office to incorporate best practices and lessons learned into Comhairle operations. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|----------------|-------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 5.4.3 | Seek opportunities for the National Participation Office to link up with international youth participation structures and groups to gain international perspectives and insight. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 5.4.4 | Monitor international research developments in youth participation, and seek opportunities to contribute to this research where appropriate and support the development of best practice in youth participation. | DCEDIY | National Participation Office | | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 5.5 | We will harness national, European and international networking and information sharing opportunities to enable Comhairle na nÓg to share good practice and learn from the experience of other structures and countries. | | | | | | | |
| 5.5.1 | Work to ensure that Comhairlí are fully informed so they are equipped to participate in the relevant Erasmus+ funding programme. | National Participation Office | Léargas | | | ● | | |
| 5.5.2 | Develop networking opportunities (both face-to-face and virtual) to allow for information sharing and networking among Coordinators and young people with other participation initiatives nationally and internationally. | National Participation Office | Local Authority and CNN Coordinators | | | ● | | |
| 5.5.3 | Establish a permanent network of youth participation structures to support the development of best practice, innovation and evidence generation. | National Participation Office | | | | ● | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 5.5.4 | Contribute to building best practice at national and international level, using the experience, evaluations and the research of the National Participation Office (where relevant and/or practical). | National Participation Office | | | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|---------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 5.6 | We will continuously review, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg, the National Executive and other participation structures as they develop over the life of this development plan and beyond, to ensure they continue to optimally support and enable Ireland’s children and young people to have their voices heard on matters that affect their lives. | | | | | | | |
| 5.6.1 | Continue to publish a comprehensive annual report on Comhairle operations, developments and overall performance. | National Participation Office | DCEDIY, Pobal | | | | | |

| Ref. | Action | Responsibility | | Timeline | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Lead | Partner | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 5.6.2 | Undertake a mid-term progress review of the Five Year Development Plan to present to the Cross-departmental Oversight Committee (responsible for overseeing the implementation of this plan). | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | | | | | |
| 5.6.3 | Continue to ensure all youth participation activity undertaken at both national and local level is independently reported on and evaluated against the Lundy Model of Participation (where appropriate). | National Participation Office | DCEDIY | | | | | |

Appendix 2: Acknowledgements

DCEDIY and Comhairle na nÓg would like to thank the following stakeholders for their participation in the strategic planning consultation process:

- Department of Rural and Community Development
- Department of Education
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- NAPD
- Local Authority representatives with responsibility for Comhairle na nÓg
- Comhairle na nÓg National Executive
- Comhairle na nÓg Coordinators
- Comhairle members, past and present
- Participation Team
- Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committees
- Pobal
- Hub na nÓg
- Foróige
- Tusla
- CYPSCs
- Youth Work Ireland
- Jigsaw
- Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland
- Ombudsman for Children's Office.

Appendix 3: National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making checklists

Planning Checklist

This checklist guides you on how to listen to children and young people and involve them in decision-making when you are developing policies, plans, services, programmes, governance, research and legislation at national, local and organisational level.

You should inform children and young people that they have the right to a voice in decision-making and that you will take their views seriously.

Space

- How will you ensure that children and young people are involved as early as possible?
- How will their involvement be sustained?
- How will those who have been, or may be, directly affected by the topic be involved?
- What steps will be taken to ensure the process is inclusive and accessible?
- How will they be supported to feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves?
- What support will be provided to those who become anxious, upset or uncomfortable?

Voice

- Have you made a clear list of the topics on which you want to hear the views of children and young people?
- How will you ensure that the key focus of the process stays on the topic you identified?
- How will they know that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time?
- How will you support them in giving their own views, while including age-appropriate and accessible information?
- How will you ensure that they are given a range of ways to express themselves that best suits their needs and choices?
- How will the process allow them to identify topics they want to discuss?

Audience

- How will children and young people know to whom, how and when their views will be communicated?
- How will you show your commitment to being informed and influenced by their views?
- How will you identify and involve relevant decision-makers (those responsible for influencing change)?
- How and when will a report/record and a child or youth friendly summary of their views be compiled?
- How will you ensure that they are given an opportunity to confirm that their views are accurately recorded?
- What plans are in place to support them to play a role in communicating their own views?

Influence

- How will children and young people be informed about the scope they have (including the limitations) to influence decision-making?
- How will they be given age-appropriate and accessible feedback at key points during the development of a service or policy?
- What are your plans to make sure that children and young people's views impact on decisions?
- How will they be given age-appropriate and accessible feedback explaining how their views were used and the reasons for the decisions taken, in a timely manner?
- How will you ensure that they are given opportunities to evaluate the process throughout?

Evaluation Checklist

This checklist is a guide for the self-evaluation and external evaluation of policies, plans, services, programmes, governance, research and legislation at national, local and organisational level.

Space

- How did you ensure that children and young people were involved as early as possible?
- How was their involvement sustained?
- How were those who are directly affected by the topic involved?
- What steps were taken to ensure the process was inclusive and accessible?
- How were they supported to feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves?
- What support was provided to those who became anxious, upset or uncomfortable?

Voice

- Have you made a clear list of the topics Did you make a clear list of the topics on which you want to hear the views of children and young people?
- How did you ensure that the key focus of the process stayed on the topics you identified?
- How did they know that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time?
- How did you support them to give their own views, while including age-appropriate and accessible information?
- How did you ensure that they were given a range of ways to express themselves that best suited their needs and choices?
- How did the process allow them to identify topics they wanted to discuss?

Audience

- How did children and young people know to whom, how and when their views would be communicated?
- How did you show that you were committed to being informed and influenced by their views?
- How did you identify and involve relevant decision-makers (those responsible for influencing change)?
- How and when was a report/record and a child or youth-friendly summary of their views compiled?
- How did you ensure that they were given an opportunity to confirm that their views were accurately recorded?
- What plans were put in place to support children and young people to play a role in communicating their own views?

Influence

- How were children and young people informed about the scope they have (including the limitations) to influence decision-making?
- How were they given age-appropriate and accessible feedback at key points during the development of a service or policy?
- What did you do with their views?
- How were they given age-appropriate and accessible feedback, explaining how their views were used and the reasons for the decisions taken, in a timely manner?
- How did you ensure that they were given opportunities to evaluation the process throughout?

Everyday Spaces Checklist

This checklist is designed as a guide to help you ensure that children and young people have a voice in decision-making. It can be applied to many everyday situations including those that occur in classrooms, childcare setting, and youth and sports clubs, as well as to activities conducted as part of youth projects, games, arts and creative initiatives.

Please do not use this checklist for developing policies, plans, services, programmes, governance, research and legislation – use the Planning Checklist on page 115.

Please make sure that the ways you involve children and young people in decision-making are age-appropriate and accessible for all, whether in person or online.

Space

- How can children and young people feel safe to express their views?
- Have you allowed enough time to listen to and hear their views?
- How do you make sure that all children and young people are heard?

Voice

- How are children and young people provided with the support they need to give their views and be heard?
- How can they raise the things that matter to them?
- How are they offered different ways of giving their views?

Audience

- How do you show that you are ready and willing to listen to children and young people's views?
- How do you make sure they understand what you can do with their views?

Influence

- How will children and young people know how much influence they can have on decisions?
- How will you give them feedback?
- How will you share with them the impact of their views on decisions?
- How will you explain the reasons for the decisions taken?

Appendix 4: Summary of key messages from consultations

1. Structures and relationships

The structures and relationships that exist to enable the Comhairle na nÓg to function appropriately

| What young people said... | What other stakeholders said... |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CNN Coordinator is very important to the successful running of their Comhairle • The selection methods for CNN need to be improved • Knowledge and awareness of the CNN Steering Committee is low • The CNN National Executive is well organised and good at gathering local opinions • The role/purpose of Dáil na nÓg needs to be better explained to the Comhairlí • Majority of people elected to CNN are from more affluent areas – this needs to change to better represent the area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify/simplify structures – too many players • Build/strengthen national relationships • Build/strengthen local relationships and structures • Staff turnover affect structures and relationships too much (person-centric) – the reliance on champions needs to be reduced • A balance between national influence and local autonomy needs to be ensured • Getting (some) schools to engage with CNN is challenging • Greater engagement with, and links between, Comhairlí is needed • Structures must ensure young people are consulted on young people's issues – this is a policy requirement • The relationships between Comhairlí and their local political system are inconsistent • Current decision-making structures do not meaningfully encourage engagement with children and young people |

2. Culture and communication

The culture that exists within Comhairle na nÓg and the communication approach adopted to inward and outward engagement

| What young people said... | What other stakeholders said... |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications between all CNN groups across the country needs to be improved • Face-to-face meetings are the most effective form of communication • Members would like to receive general news and updates relevant to their Comhairle more frequently • Member commitment needs improvement • Networking events (local, regional and national) are very important to the successful running of CNN – Dáil na nÓg, National Showcase and regional networking events are preferred | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The culture is open and atmosphere is accepting • Better communications and information sharing between Comhairlí is needed • There are opportunities for Comhairlí to work together more often – to develop a collective voice and focus on national topics • Infrastructures for sharing information and learning opportunities between Comhairlí are needed • Communication methods should be youth friendly – e.g. WhatsApp, social media, etc. • Online engagement/ communication needs to be conducted in an accessible and inclusive way • Getting all 31 Comhairlí to engage with the Participation Team so that things can be brought together nationally is challenging • A central communications strategy is needed • Strengthen the CNN culture to keep children and young people front and centre |

3. Perception and reach

The general awareness, visibility and understanding of Comhairle na nÓg and its brand image among various stakeholder groups

| What young people said... | What other stakeholders said... |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation needs to be rebranded and improvements should be made to the image of CNN – some young people are embarrassed to be part of it • The majority of young people and the wider public do not know or understand what CNN is • CNN needs to be better known so that more young people will want to join • More could be done around the diversity of members • Selection at schools should be changed – not just student council members, the ‘good kids’, TY students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CNN brand is out of date • There is a lack of awareness about CNN among the general population and a lack of understanding of what it is/does • Greater visibility and awareness are needed, CNN should be recognised as the go-to structure for children and young people’s voices • A national push on recognition for CNN is needed to enable greater local recognition • A greater emphasis on diversity is needed • There is a perception that it is for elite, high performing, middle class children and young people • There is a perception that CNN does not reach seldom-heard / marginalised young people • The recruitment process needs to ensure that all young people are represented • Schools need to encourage students to participate |

4. Influence

The impact and effectiveness of each Comhairle, and the difference they are making on the ground

| What young people said... | What other stakeholders said... |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNN has the ability to influence Local Authorities' decision-making, but more supports need to be in place to make this happen • There are no effective channels for Comhairle members to use to communicate with local Government decision-makers • Local councils should actively seek the input of their Comhairle • The National Executive has a good amount of influence and can work with the relevant Government minister/department • Participants want to see their suggestions being implemented; they want their voices to be both heard and acted on, and they would like a feedback loop to be put in place to inform them about the outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To widen CNN's influence, its reach should be extended • Influence is dependent on relationships – key bodies and structures need to be strengthened in this context • Greater Government transparency is needed to enable CNN to get involved • A seat should be reserved in policy groups for, and agencies should be mandated to engage with, CNN • Members are beginning to doubt their capacity in terms of influence • Young people should be involved at the actual decision-making stage, rather than just participating in tick-box consultations • Comhairlí can work together to influence national policy |

5. Training and supports

The structured training and supports that exist for young people, Coordinators, and others

| What young people said... | What other stakeholders said... |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members leave before the end of their term due to a lack of support • Trainings should be provided to Comhairle members at the start of each term to help them to perform their role • Members should receive a handbook, workshop or training on lobbying and activism • More educational information classes/sessions should be offered to young people so they can learn more about the causes they are passionate about | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high staff turnover rate means that trainings are continuously needed for new employees • An induction workshop should be put in place for all new members • Training opportunities are affected by limited resources • Coordinators and Local Authority staff should be consulted on what training is needed locally • A standardised training for members should be implemented (but it should not be too prescriptive in order to allow for local variables) • Education and awareness training is needed externally – Local Authority members, agencies, schools • Standardised tools and supports are needed to allow Comhairlí to operate effectively |

6. Funding and resources

The adequacy of current funding, whether additional funding opportunities exist, and whether reallocation is required

| What young people said... | What other stakeholders said... |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More funding needs to be secured to support Comhairle operations • Funding for transportation is a big issue, particularly for young people living in rural areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A larger core budget is needed – €20K is not enough • Increased funding for Coordinators is critical – there is scope for CNN to be developed a lot further but not the necessary time/resources • Funding varies – some Comhairlí only have the core budget while some Local Authorities provide additional top-up support • Approaches to budget management at local level are inconsistent • The Development Fund is allocated unfairly – larger counties have higher running costs but the same allocation • Youth organisations are subsidising budgets / fundraising / allocating additional time to CNN out of goodwill • There is a reliance on goodwill from the community to save spending |

7. Process, technology and data

The processes, guidance, tools and technology in place to enable delivery and inform decision-making

| What young people said... | What other stakeholders said... |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online meetings are more structured than face-to-face meetings • Tools such as Zoom are good • An agenda for meetings would be helpful • CNN needs to improve its interaction with young people on social media • Difficulties accessing broadband or the necessary technologies have been experienced by some members, however the use of online meeting tools may be a solution for those with transport/ accessibility concerns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high staff turnover results in gaps in understanding in terms of how things work in CNN • Each Comhairle operates within its own silo – there are local inconsistencies, different ways of working • There are Wi-Fi challenges associated with online meetings but there are transport challenges associated with face-to-face meetings • Should a hybrid engagement model be used? • Greater guidance is needed to support youth organisations in working meaningfully with young people and getting the best out of their participation in consultations • Capturing data is challenging (GDPR) • Technology allowed CNN to continue during COVID-19, but also highlighted a digital poverty gap (in terms of accessing technologies, and a safe space to use them) • COVID-19 may demand new ways of working for a long time (e.g. for the AGM, for face-to-face meetings/events) Guidance/rules will be required to support this and formalise future working methods |

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