

AGM Comhairle na nÓg 2021

Wednesday 10th November

09.30-12.30pm

To take part in this year's virtual AGM for Comhairle na nÓg 2021 please make contact with me before today before 4pm – through Chat on TEAMS.

If chosen you will be asked to complete a registration form today – Parents/Guardians will need to complete this form (*cut and paste into the http box*):

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1lq5ulmjM7ecdONaUgo1wuBE54eRINaZg76j2-2rVWQo/viewform?edit_requested=true

On the day you will be taking part virtually but from school – probably the Library or the Computer room.

The event is supported by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman TD.

The AGM agenda includes icebreakers, presentations from members, a guest speaker, games, and a break. There will be a scheduled break at 11.10 am for 10 minutes. This is to ensure that those attending can engage and participate fully throughout the course of the day.

Find out about Comhairle – read below:

Play this YouTube video <https://youtu.be/uNLw1-mVam0> to groups so that your young people have an idea of what Comhairle is about.

Read attached:

What is Comhairle na nÓg?

Comhairle na nÓg are child and youth councils in the 31 Local Authority areas of the country. They were set up to give children and young people (under the voting age of 18) a voice in the development of local services and policies. All Local Authorities have regular meetings of Comhairle na nÓg, which link with adult decision-making bodies.

Comhairle na nÓg were established under the *National Children's Strategy (2000)*, which is based on the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*.

Comhairle na nÓg Annual General Meetings

Every Comhairle na nÓg holds an Annual General Meeting in September or October, to which children and young people are invited from local schools and youth groups. Attendance at AGMs ranges from 80 -150 young people, depending on the size of the city or county.

At the AGM, young people pick topics which are of most importance to them in their local area and give their opinions on the topics during workshops.

Comhairle na nÓg members are elected or selected at the AGM. These members are responsible for working on the topics picked at the AGM and being the consultative forum that works with decision-makers.

How are young people's voices heard through Comhairle na nÓg?

The Comhairle na nÓg gets young people's voices heard in two ways: working on young people's topics; and acting as a consultative forum.

Working on young people's topics:

One of the most important aspects of Comhairle na nÓg is that it allows young people to select and work on topics of importance to young people locally. Examples of the topics selected by young people include: mental health services for young people, facilities for young people, how young people are treated by the adult world and homophobic bullying.

The work of the Comhairle na nÓg on these topics includes: getting the views of other young people, doing background research, meeting with local decision-makers, developing surveys, organising meetings, making videos, producing leaflets or posters, developing online materials and other activities. Through this work, the Comhairle na nÓg members try to make an impact or change to improve the lives of young people.

Consultative forum:

The other important aspect of the work of the Comhairle na nÓg is being a consultative forum, for adult decision-makers in the locality. Many local agencies consult with their Comhairle na nÓg to get the views of young people on the development of relevant services and policies, such as heritage plans, play and recreation policies, policing plans, giving feedback on youth-friendly questionnaires, giving feedback on the location or type of new sports facility to be established in the area. Comhairle na nÓg are also often asked for submissions on local policies or to take part in public consultations.

How is Comhairle na nÓg funded?

Comhairle na nÓg is funded by a number of agencies. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund provides money to local authorities to run effective Comhairle na nÓg. Local authorities also provide funding and resources for Comhairle na nÓg, as well as other organisations at local level.

How is Comhairle na nÓg supported?

As well as funding the 31 Comhairle na nÓg, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) also funds three regional Participation Officers, who provide advice, resources and training to all 31 Comhairle na nÓg Co-ordinators.

The Comhairle na nÓg Coordinator is the key organiser of Comhairle na nÓg. He or she is supported by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs Participation Officers, local colleagues and members of the Steering Committee.

Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committees help the Comhairle na nÓg to achieve their desired impact and change. Steering Committee members usually include a local authority representative, the Comhairle na nÓg Coordinator, local youth service representatives, the VEC Youth Officer and other relevant individuals and organisations.

Dáil na nÓg

Dáil na nÓg is the national parliament for young people aged 12-18 years. The DCYA funds and oversees Dáil na nÓg, which is hosted every second year by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Delegates are elected to Dáil na nÓg by the 31 Comhairle na nÓg.

200 delegates attended the tenth annual Dáil na nÓg which took place in November 2013. The top recommendation from Dáil na nÓg 2013 was the 'A national gathering for second-level students, with music and events, to improve attitudes towards mental health'.

Every alternate year, the Comhairle na nÓg National Showcase is hosted. The National Showcase is an opportunity for the Comhairle na nÓg groups to display their work on their topic to national decision-makers such as TDs, Senators and civil servants and to link with other Comhairlí na nÓg members.

Comhairle na nÓg National Executive

One representative from each Comhairle na nÓg is elected to the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive, which follows up on the recommendations from Dáil na nÓg and tries to make changes for young people in those areas. The National Executive has a term of office of two years and meets once a month. The Executive is facilitated and supported by the DCYA, who ensure that they get the opportunity to engage with appropriate Ministers, policy-makers, Oireachtas Committees and other decision-makers.

For more information on the Comhairle na nÓg programme and to find out more about the Comhairle na nÓg in your area, please go to www.comhairlenanog.ie

