Access All Areas

A Diversity Toolkit
for the Youth Work Sector

Promoting equality and inclusion

A self-assessment Toolkit for youth leaders to assess the level of equality and inclusion in their programmes...

... with practical tips on how to make youth organisations fully inclusive for all young people

nYci
national youth council of ireland
COMHAIRLE NÁISIÚNTA NA NÓG

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Edited by:

Anne Walsh (NYCI) & **Matthew Seebach (YWI)**

Layout by:

Gina Halpin (YWI) & **Niamh Kenny**

Proof reading by:

Rachel Mahon

Illustrations by:

Susan Leen

www.susanleen.carbonmade.com

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SECTION ONE

Why should I use this Toolkit?

"Equality is not about treating people the same, because different groups of people have different needs, different groups experience discrimination in different areas of life in different ways. Treating everyone the same can have the effect of being an indirect form of discrimination when it is clear that some groups have much greater needs than others. Equality is about securing equality of opportunity, equality of participation and equality of outcome."   NCCRI, March 2003

What is this Toolkit about?

This Toolkit has been designed to be used by trained youth workers, by volunteers at local youth services, by directors and managers of youth services and anyone else working with young people. This Toolkit invites us to look at the supports that are needed - at a personal and organisational level - to make sure that all young people in a community feel they belong and are actively participating.

Young people have diverse lives and identities. Some will have a disability, many will have come from a minority ethnic background, others will have left school early; a number will be involved with the juvenile justice system. There are young people who are members of the Traveller community, some young people may be parents, or they may be gay or coping with a mental health issue. Many young people may identify with more than one of the groups outlined above.

Creating a youth service that is inclusiveness of all these young people and responsive to their needs involves:

- Openness and dialogue

- A willingness to change and

- A commitment to equality

Equality is based on four key objectives:

1. Access to services

2. Inclusion in decision making and shaping one's own community

3. Relationships based on love, care, respect and solidarity, and

4. Acknowledgement of diversity and the right to social status[i]

Creating a service based on equality means asking if our projects, programmes and activities are based on the norms and values of the majority group or do they include the needs of young people from diverse living circumstances and identities?

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NYCI identifies the benefits and outcomes of youth work to young people as being:

- **A positive sense of self**
- **The development of life skills and attributes**
- **New experiences and opportunities**
- **The opportunity to contribute to the development of their community**
- **A sense of belonging**

Does your service offer the same level of outcome to all young people in your community? For example:

- **Do some young people feel intimidated by the dominance of the majority group?**
- **Is it harder for some young people to physically access and participate in your project or group?**
- **Is there racism or homophobia in the project or group which makes it difficult for young people from diverse backgrounds to participate?**
- **Does your service accommodate the various learning needs of young people?**

The principle of equality and inclusion needs to be firmly embedded in our society and promoted from an early age. Youth work is an ideal setting for working towards this goal by exploring issues and developing awareness with young people.

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How will this Toolkit help you to create an inclusive service for young people?

1. It can help you to **quickly assess** how well you are currently doing and begin equality proofing your work through providing equality and inclusion checklists

2. It can help you to **plan** by providing information about needs, demographics and how to consult with young people with diverse lives and identities

3. It can help you to **provide better service** to all groups by giving practical tips and supports

4. It can help you **develop policies** through providing guidelines and templates

5. It provides lists of **resources** and links for providing more effective and inclusive youth work

Funding
  - **Don't forget that most funding bodies ask organisations to state how their service is being inclusive. This Toolkit will help you to assess your current level of inclusiveness and help you to develop inclusive practices**

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Equality and Inclusion – What is it?

Equality:

- **Everybody is of equal worth and deserves equal respect and dignity**
- **Everybody should have equal prospects of well-being and having their needs met, and resources should be distributed in such a way to provide for this**
- **Everybody should have equal prospects to develop**
- **Everybody should have equal rights including an equal chance to have their say** [ii]

Inclusion:

Inclusion is a process that is relevant to all young people but particularly focuses on those groups who have historically been marginalised or at risk. It involves a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging; and the provision of resources to achieve equality of outcome for all. It recognises the need to involve parents/carers in its practices and decision-making processes. It also asserts that inclusion is not possible without those being 'included' playing a full part in the process. [iii]

Inclusion is about the quality of young people's experience; how they are supported to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the youth service. In essence it involves adapting policies and practices within youth services to remove barriers to learning so that nobody is marginalised. Inclusion moves away from labelling young people, towards creating an appropriate learning environment for all children. [iv]

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What does Government Policy say?

There are clear Government and youth sector commitments to working better to meet the needs of diverse young people through legislation, policies and strategies.

Republic of Ireland Government Policy

The Youth Work Act

The Youth Work Act 2001 established a legal framework for the provision of youth work in Ireland. It governs all Youth Work in Ireland and commits youth services to meet the needs of all young people equally and fairly.

A key feature of the Youth Work Act is that it obligates providers to deliver youth work services to young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, to minority language communities and on an equal basis with regard to gender. The Act also places quotas and obligations on the formation of elected voluntary councils with reference to gender equality and the inclusion of members from the Traveller community. [v]

The National Youth Work Development Plan 2003-2007

This plan commits to uphold the Equal Status Act which places obligations on youth services to deliver services in an equal and non-discriminatory way. In its key points in relation to equality and inclusiveness," it states:

"Proposals for a National Youth Work Development Plan are based on a commitment to a vision of youth work which values diversity, aims to eradicate injustice and inequality, and strives for openness and

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inclusiveness in all its dealings with young people and adults. It aims to uphold in spirit as well as in letter the provisions of the Equal Status Act, whereby no adult or young person may experience discrimination on the basis of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, nationality or ethnicity, including membership of the Traveller community." [vi]

It also states:

"The fact that while organisations are increasingly attempting to work with groups of young people for whom provision has heretofore been inadequate (this includes but is not limited to young people with disabilities, young Travellers, young gay men, lesbian women, bisexuals and young refugees), much more still could be done in this regard."

This statement clearly recognises the existence of inequalities and suggests that youth work should pursue a reformist and activist agenda in equality. The NYWDP acknowledges that one of the key challenges for youth work is:

"The need for intercultural aptitudes and awareness among young people and those who work with them. An adequate youth work response requires….that all young people, and all youth workers, are facilitated in developing the awareness and skills appropriate for a more diverse cultural environment." [vii]

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Northern Ireland Government Policy

In Northern Ireland the legislation governing youth service activities include Article 37 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 and The Youth Service (NI) Order 1989. In addition to the responsibilities under these Orders, and under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, there are a number of key documents that underpin the delivery of youth services and provide a mandate for delivering an inclusive service.

10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People

This is the overarching strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland. The strategy outlines a shared vision of children and young people to be:

- Healthy

- Enjoying, learning and achieving

- Living in safety and with stability

- Experiencing economic and environmental well being

- Contributing positively to community and society

- Living in a society which respects their rights

It highlights the need to provide equality across services and to tackle challenges that need to be mitigated to ensure provision is inclusive of all.

Youth Work Strategy 2005-2008

The Department of Education is currently developing a new youth work strategy and will be consulting on key themes for its next strategy in the coming months.

One of the key themes in the current strategy is 'Delivering Effective

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Inclusive Youth Work'. The strategy aims to:

"Ensure that high quality youth work is inclusively and effectively delivered to facilitate the personal and social development of young people within a supportive public policy framework."

Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice

The curriculum framework for youth work in Northern of Ireland identifies core values against which each youth work agency, organisation or group should regularly test their policies, procedures and practice. These values are:

Equity – ensuring that we do not directly or indirectly exclude people, and that we seek positive ways of including those who might otherwise feel excluded

Diversity – encourages respect for and expression of the range of identities represented by the youth of Northern Ireland

Interdependence – recognises and explores ways in which our individual paths are intertwined

What does legislation say?

Republic of Ireland legislation

Equal Status Act (2000) and the Equality Act (2004) – as it relates to Youth Work

The Equal Status Act 2000 and Equality Act 2004 prohibit services from discriminating and harassment on nine grounds. 'Services' includes all youth services, whether they are run by volunteers or paid staff or whether fees are paid by participants or not.

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The nine grounds are:

- **Age**
- **Gender**
- **Religion**
- **Disability**
- **Family Status**
- **Marital Status**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Membership of the Traveller community**
- **Race(Ethnicity, Skin Colour or National Origin)**

Northern Ireland legislation

Section 75 (a) – as it relates to Youth Work

Similarly Section 75(a) of the NI Act (1998) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need for promoting equality of opportunity across nine equality grounds;

- **age,**
- **racial group,**
- **marital status**
- **sexual orientation;**
- **between men and women generally;**
- **between persons of different religious belief,**
- **between persons of different political opinion,**
- **between persons with a disability and persons without; and**
- **between persons with dependants and persons without.**

Other relevant equality legislation in the North, which protects young people through the provision of education and services, includes:

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- The sex discrimination (NI) order 1976 (as amended)
- Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (as amended)
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Part 111
- The Special Education Needs and Disability (NI) order 2005 (Amendment) (Further and Higher Education) Regulations (NI) 2006

Discrimination

Discrimination is treating a person less favourably than another person. It includes making distinctions between people and denying them opportunities on the grounds of issues other than ability or qualifications; for example their gender, sexuality, ethnic background, disability, family circumstances etc.

Under the Equality Legislation there are 3 kinds of discrimination:

1. **Direct** (e.g. refusing someone a service, being hostile to young people because of an aspect of their identity). Direct discrimination occurs when a person receives less favourable treatment or a less favourable outcome than another person in the same situation would have received on the grounds of their identity under the nine grounds.

2. **Indirect** (e.g. creating barriers to a young person's participation in a youth service). Indirect discrimination occurs when a seemingly neutral policy or requirement actually has an adverse impact on a person from a minority background. Indirect discrimination can be unintentional. It can happen when services fail to take into consideration that different groups of people have different needs. Treating people with different needs the same can have the effect of being an indirect form of discrimination. For

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example, failing to provide for the mobility needs, such as providing wheelchair ramps, for people who are wheelchair users is a form of indirect discrimination that is fundamentally inequitable as it clearly denies access to those young people.

3. **By Association** – a young person is discriminated against not because of their identity or status but because of their association with someone else (e.g. treating someone unfavourably because they are a family member or friend of a gay person, member of the Traveller community, person with a disability etc).

N.B. In Northern Ireland, this would be known in equality legislation as 'Victimisation'

Harassment

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the discriminatory grounds that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating a hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

Harassment, including sexual harassment on any of the nine grounds is prohibited. This prohibition applies to all aspects of a youth service: in programmes, in drop-ins, on trips, on the sports field, and so on.

A person who is responsible for the

operation of a youth service must not permit a young person to be harassed or to be sexually harassed because of their identity or status linked to the nine grounds. This responsible person will be liable for the harassment or sexual harassment unless they took reasonably practical steps to prevent it.

In this way a young person could take a case against a youth service if they are being harassed or sexually harassed by another young person. The onus is then on the youth service to try to prove that they took all reasonable measures to ensure that it was stopped.

Youth services are liable for discrimination or harassment committed by an employee in the course of their work, whether or not it was done with the youth service's knowledge or approval. A service has a defence against being liable for the discriminatory actions or harassment of an employee if it can prove that it took such steps as were reasonably practical to prevent the employee from committing the actions.

NB: Harassment applies to both the actions of workers and of young people.

Positive Action

Positive action occurs when measures are taken to correct an unequal state of affairs, for example where equality of outcome has been verifiably absent because of discrimination in the past. Examples would be where previously under-represented groups (such as women) are

deliberately included.

Under the Equal Status Act in the Republic of Ireland, youth services are allowed to:

- Provide preferential treatment

- Take positive actions that are genuinely intended to promote equality of opportunity for young people covered by the nine grounds

Further info: **the Equality Authority** **Phone**: 1890 245 545 **Email**: info@equality.ie **Website**: www.equality.ie	Further info: **the Equality Commission** **Phone**: 028 90 500 600 **Email**: information@equalityni.org **Website**: www.equalityni.org

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How can you use this Toolkit?

Each section will lead you through some of the positive actions you can take towards achieving equality and inclusion in your organisation. It will outline the specific barriers that young people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances may face in accessing and participating in youth work and it gives you information and guidelines on how to address those barriers.

Sections

Each of the sections has:

- **Information** on the demographics of the particular diverse group

- The **needs** and **issues** of this group

- **Practical tips** on working with young people from this group

- **Resources** – contacts and useful links for working with this group

- **Checklist** to assess how well you are including each group

Checklists

The checklists presented at the end of each section will allow you to assess how well your service is doing in offering equality of opportunity, equality of participation and equality of outcome to young people who have diverse lives and identities in your community. It is a self-assessment exercise and can be used repeatedly and by all members of an organisation in an ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation. Best practice international models show that obvious improvements should be planned for and verified by repeating the self assessment on a bi-annual basis. This allows groups to ascertain their current position and to measure their achievements from this position over a two year

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period. At all times it is important to compare your current levels of inclusion with locally based statistics to get an accurate reading of how inclusive your service is in relation to the community in which you work.

The checklists are all framed under a proofing model referred to as the 5 P's which are outlined here:
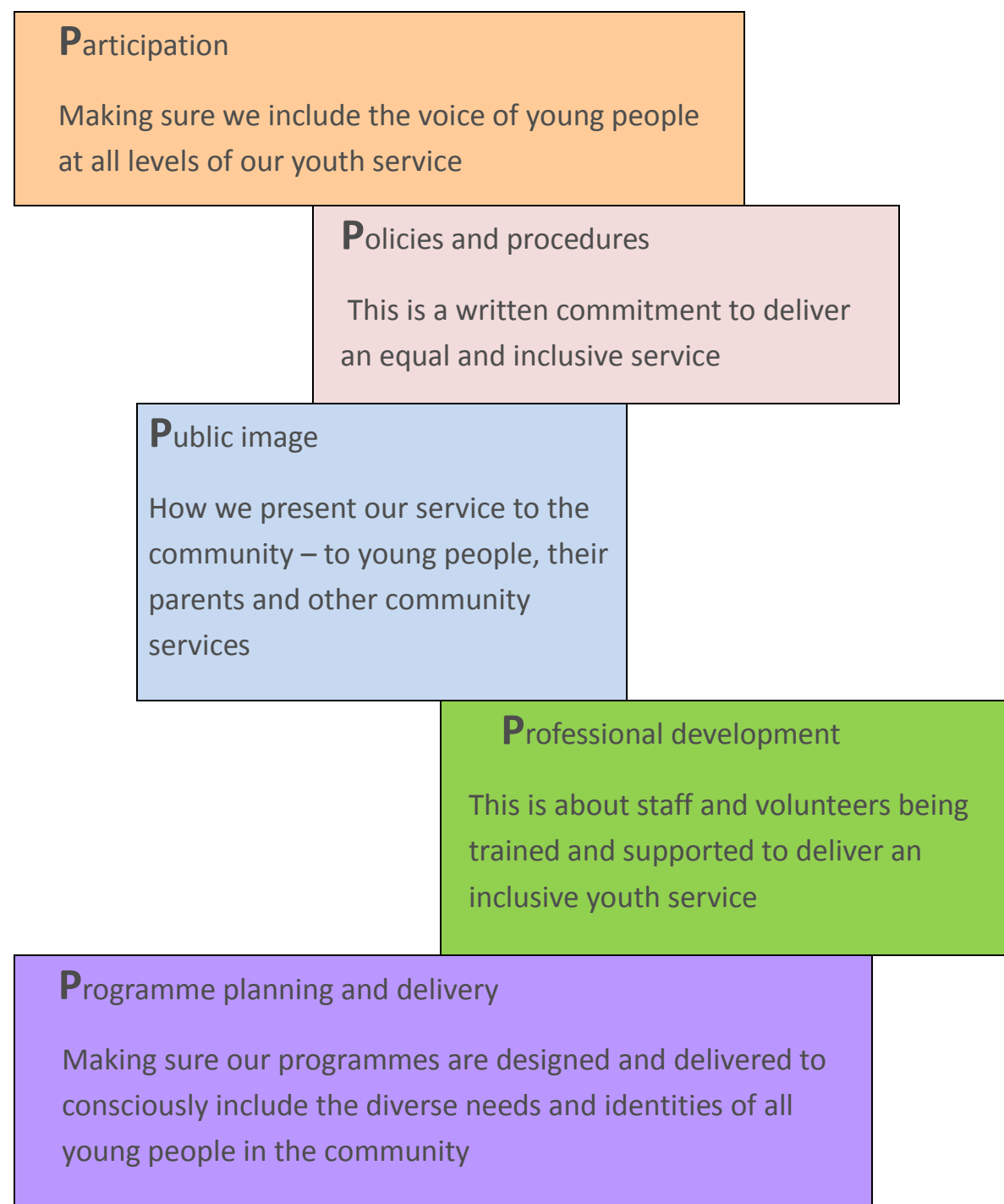
Participation

Making sure we include the voice of young people at all levels of our youth service

Policies and procedures

This is a written commitment to deliver an equal and inclusive service

Public image

How we present our service to the community – to young people, their parents and other community services

Professional development

This is about staff and volunteers being trained and supported to deliver an inclusive youth service

Programme planning and delivery

Making sure our programmes are designed and delivered to consciously include the diverse needs and identities of all young people in the community

Encompassing these five criteria at all times is the question of practice:

Practice

This is about looking beyond the practical application of youth work to the values and attitudes that pervade the youth service. It is crucial that this is fully considered in all youth work.

Using the checklists

- **Read the checklists. You may find it easiest to do this in a team setting or with representatives from the staff, board, management and volunteers**
- **Having completed the checklists you will have a number of 'no' and 'yes' and 'in progress' or 'partially' responses. Consider the yes responses as areas where you are doing well and no and 'in progress' responses as equality issues that need to be resolved in your youth service. With your 'no' and 'in progress' responses choose a workable number of issues to complete over a medium term period**
- **Develop a work plan, indicating who will be responsible, when the action will be completed and milestones on the road to completion of the plan**
- **When the work plan is completed, evaluate your progress and choose your next goal**

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Master checklist

At the end of this section we present a master checklist for managers of projects that will help you determine how well equality and inclusion is embedded in your service.

The master checklist is designed to explore how well youth services are reaching all young people in the community who have diverse lives or identities. When we talk about diversity in this checklist we are referring to young LGBT people, young parents, young people with mental health issues, young Travellers, early school leavers, young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, young people involved in the juvenile justice system, young parents or young people with a physical disability, have sight loss or who are Deaf. Therefore, where the checklist refers in general to diversity we would ask you to think about all these diverse lives and identities when answering the questions. More specific checklists that are designed to look at service delivery for each of the above named groups are to be found at the end of each section of this Toolkit. Ideally all of the checklists should be completed by each youth service.

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Looking at equality and inclusion policies

After filling out the checklists you may have identified the need for a new equality and inclusion policy or a need to review your existing policies. Ideally, your youth service will have the capacity to commit to immediately developing an equality policy and action plan to bring about comprehensive and strategic actions to mainstream equality for all young people including those with diverse lives and identities.

Guidelines on developing an equality and inclusion policy

An equality and inclusion policy should be developed in consultation with all team members. It should be reflective of practice and offer workable guidelines toward maintaining an inclusive and equal youth work. It should include the following headings:

1. Your organisations mission statement

2. Your organisation's general principles/core values/guiding principles

3. Statement of your organisation's commitments to equality and inclusion

4. A statement of who is targeted in an equality and inclusion policy. At minimum these must include all of the following 9 grounds:

   ➢ Gender

   ➢ Marital status

   ➢ Disability

   ➢ Race (Colour; Ethnic or National origin)

> Membership of the Traveller community

> Family status

> Sexual orientation

> Political or religious belief

> Age

Ideally you would also include the following:

> Socio-economic status

> Antibody status

> Responsibility for dependants

> Address

> Trade Union membership

> Criminal conviction

> Recovering from addiction

5. Statements outlining the responsibility of your organisation and its staff with regard to equality and inclusion

6. Policy implementation statements about your:

> Programmes and practices

> Publications

> Training

> The work/service environment

> Policy review and evaluations

➢ Complaints procedures

7. Complaints procedures

8. A clear outline of Irish equality legislation and definitions in relation to equality legislation—(e.g. discrimination—direct and indirect, harassment including sexual harassment, etc.)

Note

- Advice on writing an equality and inclusion policy can be obtained from the Equality Authority

- NYCI training is available on writing inclusion policies. NYCI Intercultural Officer can provide a detailed template to help you develop an Equality and Equality Policy

Ensuring equality and inclusion practice: identifying diversity in your youth organisation

It is impossible to determine how inclusive your service is if you do not know if young people using the service have diverse lives or identities. The team who collated this Toolkit considered this question in great detail and looked at best practice in other countries. The sensitivity and expertise needed to allow young people to identify themselves as LGBT for instance, or of being concerned about their mental health, is considerable and the skills needed to do this cannot be imparted through this Toolkit. Readers are advised to directly contact the relevant organisations for training and advice.

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However, contrary to this, it is totally appropriate and indeed crucial that some identities are ascertained. These include young people with special needs, those living with a disability and those from a minority ethnic background. Therefore, registration forms in all youth services should invite young people to identify their special needs, any disability and their ethnic identity. An example of how to do this is shown here. More examples, and how to use the information, in accordance with best practice, is laid out in Appendix 1.

Table 1 Identifier questions

Name? _____

What is your ethnic/national dentity?_____

[Give your answer as you do to your friends. Examples others have given to this question include Irish, Irish-Traveller, Polish, Nigerian, Kurdish, Filipino, Indian-Irish, Brazilian, Nigerian-Irish, British, Northern Irish, etc.]

What is the ethnic/national identity of your:

  Parent/guardian/primary care giver? _____

  Parent/guardian/primary care giver?_____

Other relevant information: Please mention any requirements or needs you want us to know about e.g. disability, allergies, transport, dietary needs etc .

_____
_____

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Diversity Toolkit Master Checklist

You may be filling out this checklist as a leader of a youth group/youth club or youth service. Alternatively you may be working within a youth organisation as an administrator or at organisation headquarters. Therefore the degree to which you engage directly with young people may differ from others. As a result many of the questions below have a bracketed section. The bracketed section is for those services that do not work directly with young people but whose work supports service delivery to young people.

Use this checklist to identify how you can improve your service for young people who have the following diverse lives and identities - young LGBT people, young parents, young people with mental health issues, young Travellers, early school leavers, young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, young people involved in the juvenile justice system, young parents and young people with a physical disability, have sight loss or who are Deaf.

Public image

To be successful in making people from diverse backgrounds feel included in our services they need to be visible in our organisations, [even if we do not work directly with young people]:

How do we present our services - to young people, their parents and other community services?

- We portray a range of young people in advertising, in promotional materials and in publications about our organisation　　**YES**　**PARTLY**　**NO**

- Our promotional material is accessible—i.e.　　**YES**　**PARTLY**　**NO**

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translated information, visual, disability accessible, plain English

Our service is accessible [and we encourage services we work with to be accessible]—i.e. people can:

	YES	PARTLY	NO
➢ Phone us	YES	PARTLY	NO
➢ SMS (text us)	YES	PARTLY	NO
➢ Email us	YES	PARTLY	NO
➢ Fax us	YES	PARTLY	NO
➢ Drop in to our service	YES	PARTLY	NO
• Our website is accessible to people who are blind or have sight loss	YES	PARTLY	NO
• Our buildings are wheelchair accessible	YES	PARTLY	NO
• Our staff and volunteers are open, informative and welcoming	YES	PARTLY	NO
• We have a list of services that we can refer young people to [or we encourage the groups that we work with to be aware of the services available for young people from diverse identities and living	YES	PARTLY	NO

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circumstances]

- Staff attend inter-agency/community forums

YES   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- We provide information about our organisation to a broad range of community groups

YES   **PARTLY**   **NO**

Participation

To be effective in developing relevant, useful services, it is necessary to consult with diverse communities and young people [even if we do not provide direct work]:

How do we make sure we include the voices of young people at all levels of our youth organisation?

- Our management committee includes a diverse range of community members

YES   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- We provide a range of informal ways for young people to have a say about our service (advisory groups, forums, group contracts, surveys, consultations, reviews, evaluations etc)

YES   **PARTLY**   **NO**

Programme planning and delivery

To be successful in addressing current issues faced by young people and youth workers our services need to be aware of who young people are, where they are from and how they live, [even if we do not provide direct work]:

How do we make sure our programmes are designed and

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delivered to consciously include the diverse needs and identities of all young people in the community?

- Our service has up to date information about the demographics of minority groups nationally and in our local areas [or our organisation encourages the groups that we work with to have up to date information about the demographics in their areas]　　YES　　PARTLY　　NO

We collect statistics from young people, staff and volunteers who use our service [or we ask the youth groups that we work with for statistics on the people that they work with] including:

➤ Cultural or ethnic background　　YES　　PARTLY　　NO

➤ Requirements in relation to disabilities　　YES　　PARTLY　　NO

➤ Gender　　YES　　PARTLY　　NO

- Our service compares the demographics of our local area with the people we work with to identify groups who do not use or volunteer/work at our service [or we encourage the groups we work with to identify groups who do not use or volunteer/work at their service]　　YES　　PARTLY　　NO

- We consider [or ask the groups we work with to consider] community profiles and　　YES　　PARTLY　　NO

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needs in our strategic planning processes

- We consult [or ask the groups we work with to consult] with a broad range of young people including those who do not use our services   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- We run [or encourage the running of] programmes or activities on equality and inclusion as a core part of practice   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

Professional development

Our staff and volunteers are trained and supported to deliver an inclusive youth service?

- Our organisation operates under equality of opportunity principles in relation to employment and involvement of volunteers   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- Job descriptions require staff and volunteers to have awareness of equality and inclusion issues   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- Staff and volunteers receive training on equality and inclusion issues   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

Policies and procedures

Our organisation has a written commitment to deliver an equal and inclusive service?

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- Our organisation has a written commitment to equality and inclusion in its constitution or code of practice   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- Our organisation has a written equality and inclusion policy/ies   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- Our staff, volunteers and management committee understand our equality and inclusion policy/ies   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- Our staff, volunteers and management committee understand their legal obligation regarding equality and inclusion issues   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- Our staff, volunteers and management committee understand our funding bodies requirements regarding equality and inclusion   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

- We have a strategic or action plan to ensure that our goals in relation to equality and inclusion are being - or are on target to be – met   **YES**   **PARTLY**   **NO**

References

i.   Inequality and the Stereotyping of young people, Maurice Devlin published by The Equality Authority 2006 p16-17

ii.   Based on Baker J, Lynch K, Cantillion S, and Walsh J (2004), *Equality: From Theory to Action*, Palgrave Macmillan, Bakingstoke

iii.   www.bristol-cyps.org.uk/services/eit/definitions.html

iv.   www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/multiagencyworking/glossary/?asset=glossary&id=22998

v.   Department of Education and Science 2001

vi.   Department of Education and Science, 2003 p 15

vii.   Department of Education and Science, 2003 p 3

viii.   OFMDFM http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/improving-public-services/policylink/policylink-northern-ireland-policy-making-case-studies.htm

ix.   http://www.deni.gov.uk/youth_work_strategy_pdf_216kb

x.   Youth Work - A model for effective practice, 2003 p 10

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Appendix 1

Assessing the levels of inclusion of young people and leaders who have a disability, or special requirements, who are Travellers or who come from a minority ethnic background

Rationale for asking about ethnicity, disability etc

In order to be able to be able to meet the needs of the young people who attend your organisation (and also your staff or volunteers) it is important to know what is important to them. One of the things that identify us is our ethnic or cultural identity and any special requirements or disabilities we might have. In order to plan effectively it is important to know this information. You might, for example, decide to acknowledge the diversity within your organisation by celebrating important festival days. You would need to know which ones are important to the group you are working with. You might also need to understand what cultural practices your members live by – for example certain foods might cause offence or members may have to abide by specific dress codes. When planning an event you would also need to know in advance what special supports you would have to put in place with regard to young people with a disability. For example you may need to ensure wheelchair access or provide visual aids.

What is the best approach to collecting information on ethnic identity, disability, religion etc.

One of the more obvious ways to gather information about your members is through the use of registration forms. Information about a person's identity should always be self described, by the person themselves if aged 11 or older – and by parents for participants under 11. Young people may prefer to have someone present to explain aspects of a registration form and sometimes to help them fill it out. Always respect people's right not to disclose information about themselves.

Asking identity questions does raise the question of data protection and confidentiality. Be clear to your members that this information will be kept confidential and safe and that it will be used to plan effective services that meet the needs of all those using the organisation. Also explain that you are committed to inclusiveness and equality and without this data you cannot assess how well you are meeting this goal.

Reviewing and adapting your registration forms

We would recommend using the questions in the table below when adapting your registration forms to incorporate questions on ethnicity. We have also reproduced a full sample registration form that you might like to copy, or use to adapt your own forms (See Table 3).

Table 1 Ethnic identity questions to ask young people

Name? _____

What is your ethnic/national identity?_____

[Give your answer as you do to your friends. Examples others have given to this question include Irish, Irish-Traveller, Polish, Nigerian, Kurdish, Filipino, Indian-Irish, Brazilian, Nigerian-Irish, British, Northern Irish etc.]

What is the ethnic/cultural/national identity of your:

- **Parent/guardian/primary care giver**? _____
- **Parent/guardian/primary care giver**?_____

What language/s do you speak at home? _____

Other relevant information: Please mention anything you think we should know about e.g. dietary needs, religious observance (times & days), disability, allergies, transport issues, medication, etc. and any supports you need to allow you to participate

_____

Reviewing your staff and volunteer forms

In adult situations, especially amongst staff and volunteers it is more appropriate to ask about the languages a person speaks rather than about their parent's ethnicity. This also gives you the opportunity to discover what language skills are present in your organisation. See Table 2

Table 2 Ethnic identity questions to ask adults

Name? _____

What is your ethnic/cultural/national identity?_____
[Give your answer as you do to your friends. Examples others have given to this question include Irish, Irish-Traveller, Polish, Nigerian, Kurdish, Filipino, Indian-Irish, Brazilian, Nigerian-Irish, British, Northern Irish etc.]

What languages do you speak

- 1st language (Mother tongue) _____
- 2nd language _____
- 3rd language _____
- 4th language _____

Other relevant information: Please mention anything you want us to know about e.g. dietary needs, religious observance (times & days), disability, allergies, transport issues, medication, etc. and any supports you need to allow you to participate

_____

Doing an inclusion survey when the young people have already filled out a registration form

In many situations the young people attending your organisation will already have filled out registration forms and you may want to do an inclusion survey. It would be appropriate to present a fuller form that would include additional questions together with a rationale for the young people on why you are asking these questions. See Table 3 for an example. This form is also recommended as a sample registration form that you may choose to copy or adapt for regular use with your own youth group.

There may be situations when parents or youth members ask about questions on the registration form. In practice we have rarely been asked any questions as most people are happy to respond to it as it is. However, a fuller rationale has been included after Table 3 that you can copy and use.

Table 3 – Sample registration from

This form could also be used for an inclusion survey of a youth group
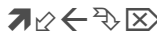
REGISTRATION FORM[1]

> Our youth centre believes in **equality, diversity and inclusion.**
>
> We would like all people to feel **included** here. In order to **respond/plan for individual needs** and interests we are asking you to complete the form below.
>
> **Only reveal what you are happy for us to know.**
>
> The information given will be **treated confidentially** and used only to make this a safe and relevant youth group that meets your needs and interests

Name:	Male ☐ Female ☐	**Tel:** ☎
		Email: 💻
Address: 🖃		**Date of birth:** / / 🎂
		Religious tradition:_____ **Practising** ☐ **Non-practising** ☐

Your National / Cultural / Ethnic Identity: _____

(Give your answer as you do to your friends. Examples others have given to this question include Irish, Irish-Traveller, Polish, Irish-Polish, Nigerian, Nigerian-Irish, British, Northern Irish etc.)

Your Parents/Guardians'/carers' national/cultural/ethnic identities:_____ _____

 (this is to recognise the cultural influences that may have played a part in your life)

Individual Requirements:

(Please mention anything that we need to know about e.g. disability, allergies, medical conditions, dietary requirements etc. and the supports you need to allow you to participate)

_____

Languages you speak:	Interests
1st language (mother tongue) _____	Friendships 🕺 Art 🎨
2nd language _____	Music 🎧 Sport ⚽
Other languages: _____	Self-Confidence 👍 Computers 💻
_____	Direction in your life ↗ ← ⊠
How did you hear about us?	Other 〰 _____
_____	

Frequently asked questions on aspects of this form

Why is it important to ask about ethnicity, religion and disability

In order to be able to be able to meet the needs of the young people who use our service (and also our staff or colleagues) it is important to know what is important to them. Our ethnic identity, our religion and any special requirements or disabilities we have all identify us in very deep ways. It is important to ask these questions alongside an assessment that asks what our members want to do and why they want to be involved in our youth activities. In order to plan effectively it is important to know all this information in advance.

Ethnicity & Language: You might, for example, want to acknowledge the cultural diversity of your members by celebrating important festival days. You would need to know which ones are important to your group members and also which languages are relevant if you wanted to put up welcome signs in different languages in your meeting spaces. You might also need to source information in other languages so you can explain your activities more clearly to parents or your members (For example, NYCI has translated flyers that explain what youth work is in 8 different languages. Scouts have their resources available in several different languages which may be used to explain difficult concepts to young people and parents with limited English language skills). You would also need to understand what cultural practices your group members live by – for example certain foods that might cause offence or specific dress codes or gender rules your group members may have to abide by.

Disability: When planning an event you would also need to know in advance what special supports to put in place to meet the specific needs of young people with a disability who would like to attend your service. For example, you may need to ensure wheelchair access or have visual aids or accommodate a support person.

Religion: You would also need to know if you can plan an event on specific days and whether your members' religious services might clash with your event and prevent them from being able to attend.

Why do you ask about our parent's or guardian's religion and ethnic identity?

Many young people from migrant or mixed ethnic backgrounds who have been brought up in Ireland may describe themselves as Irish. However, their parents/guardians ethnicity will still have a significant influence on their sense of identity. Equally their experience of being part of a migrant family may mean that they have different needs and experiences from others who have been established in an area for a long time especially in regard to having a sense of belonging.

What is meant by ethnic identity?

Ethnicity can, and is, defined in several different ways. Language by its very nature changes over time and meaning is often not fixed. We use the term ethnicity to replace the term 'race' to be able to describe how we are different to other people. That difference, however, is what we interpret it as and not how others (often wrongfully) would believe. Ethnicity, at its simplest, means the group of people to which we feel we belong. Where we belong to two (or more) groups of people then we have dual ethnicity or we are multi-ethnic. This will be the case for children of mixed parents, or for people who have lived for a considerable time in two or more different countries, or in the case of Northern Ireland where a person might feel they belong to Ireland, Britain and Northern Ireland. We believe it is better to use the term quite loosely and for people to respond to the question as they see fit. It is important to know that the group that we belong to – i.e. our ethnic identity - might, or might not necessarily, be linked to our genetic ancestry.

National identity & ethnic identity: We have used the term 'national or ethnic identity' in this registration form. We have included the term national because people understand it more easily and it is easier to define. However, there are differences since the term national is a legal definition of the country you belong to whereas ethnicity is more about where you truly feel you belong to. These are not necessarily the same but they often are. Where possible the person's ethnicity is the preferred description to include.

***

Alternate ways of doing an inclusion survey - using interactive methods to collect data on diversity

Doing a survey using registration type forms outside of your normal registration process will seldom give you a 100% return as some members will be absent on the night you do it or parents may not get around to returning the forms. There are alternative ways to collect data on the ethnic and cultural makeup of your youth group. You can do it through conversations with parents or young people at appropriate times. You can also do it through the activities that you run.

Activities for collecting information on cultural diversity in your groups

You can develop a **picture of cultural influence** for your membership by putting up a world map, an Irish map and a county map and asking the young people and volunteers to say what parts of the world/country/county they have lived in or their parents have lived in. It helps if they pin strings lines from their own name (placed on the outside of the map) to the place they want to talk about. In this activity don't forget to ask about different cultural influences from within the country such as those of the Traveller community but also include all those from the majority culture who may have been influenced by connections to other counties or villages.

You can discover how many languages are used in the group by asking the young people to draw flags or stamp their painted hands on a wall and write 'welcome' beside it in their home language/s.

If you are doing these activities as part of a data collection survey it helps to have someone observing and writing down the information. If some is unclear it can be clarified later. Make sure the young people know you are also doing a data collection exercise.

Using the data collected to assess how inclusive your organisation is

The identifier form has been designed to help you with your planning. One aspect of planning for inclusion is to establish whether the membership of your youth group reflects the diversity within your wider community. By comparing the statistics from your youth group with demographic data from your area you will be able to see if you are engaging with the young people from diverse backgrounds in your community.

It is also important to determine what supports would have to be put in place to meet the needs of your potential members. Collecting demographic data on your community can help you to plan for this in advance.

The following steps will help you with your group assessment and planning.

Step 1

Does the % of people attending your organisation from a minority ethnic background reflect the % of people from a minority ethnic background in your area?

Using registration forms or other methods that suit your youth group determine the % of all people attending your organisation from a minority ethnic background. Don't forget that the UK is included as a minority ethnic background in the Republic of Ireland. You then need to compare this figure with the % of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in your area. To find out this information you can try a number of sources:

- Ask your local schools for their statistics. Post primary schools collect these statistics. Primary schools use 10% as an average for the whole country but your local schools may be able to give you more correct information.
- If the schools can't help you ask the Department of Education and Skills for their statistics for the post primary schools in your area. It helps to

know the Department codes for the schools. The schools can give you these.

- The Department of Education Northern Ireland Statistics and Research branch can provide you with a breakdown of ethnicity in primary and post primary schools by district council area

- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency can provide you with more general information on migration and population www.nisra.gov.uk The statistics on the population comes from two main sources: 'The Registrars General Annual Report' which give an annual overview of the NI population and 'The Census' which gives a once in a decade detailed breakdown of the population (next one due 2011). Detailed population and migration small area statistics can also be obtained from the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/mapxtreme/DataCatalogue.asp?button=Population

- You could look up the central statistics website – www.cso.ie. You can find statistics for each town in Ireland with over 5000 residents classified by ethnic or cultural background from http://beyond2020.cso.ie/Census/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=109363 This data will not be broken down into age groups or specific nationalities but it gives a good indication of the wider ethnic groups in each town. If you search for SAPs (small area populations) on the www.cso.ie website you can find statistics for the smaller towns in the Republic of Ireland.

- This report is also helpful for an overview of ethnicity statistics www.cso.ie/census/census2006results/volume_5/vol_5_2006_complete.pdf

- You should also use the methods outlined above to determine the largest representations of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in your area to see if they represented in your youth group?

- For a full report for your area that includes breakdowns by age and ethnicity you can contact the Central Statistics office (CSO) directly www.cso.ie but there may be a small charge for it.

- As a last resort use a 10% figure as the figure you compare your data to

as this is the national average. This would mean that ideally 10% or your group come from a minority ethnic background.

Step 2

Does the % of people attending your organisation from the Traveller community reflect the % of people from a Traveller community in your area?

Using registration forms or other methods that suit your youth group determine the % of people attending your organisation who identify as being from a Traveller background. Many Travellers do not like to self-identify, especially in youth groups where settled young people are in the majority. Therefore, you should only ask people to identify how they personally want to describe themselves.

To see if your group reflects the wider community you need to determine the % of people from the Traveller community in your area. To find out this information you can try a number of sources:

- Pavee Point did an all Ireland health survey of the Traveller community in 2010. Their statistics are the most accurate and up to date and can be accessed for each county on www.paveepoint.ie or http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/
- Ask a local Traveller support service for advice about Travellers in your community. They may know the families in person and will be able to advise you. They may know if the Travellers in your area are keen to engage. They might also know whether they would be comfortable disclosing that they are Travellers and other sensitivities that you should be aware of.
- You could look up the central statistics website – www.cso.ie but it is important to remember that the statistics gathered by the census in 2006 does not show an accurate record of the actual number of Travellers in the country. Recent research from Pavee Point shows that the CSO figure may only represent 60% of the actual number of

Travellers in the Republic of Ireland.[ii] CSO statistics for each town in Ireland with over 5000 residents classified by ethnic or cultural background is available from http://beyond2020.cso.ie/Census/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=109363. This data will not be broken down into age groups but it gives an indication of the number of Travellers in each town. If you search for SAPs (small area populations) on the www.cso.ie website you can find statistics for the smaller towns in the Republic of Ireland. This CSO report may also be helpful for an overview of Traveller statistics www.cso.ie/census/census2006results/volume_5/vol_5_2006_complete.pdf

- For a full report for your area that includes breakdowns by age membership of the Traveller community you can contact the Central Statistics office (CSO) directly www.cso.ie but there may be a small charge for it and as described above the figure will be indicative rather than accurate.

Step 3

If your membership is not inclusive of minority ethnic or Traveller young people you can still do inclusive youth work.

There may be a number of reasons why your group is not culturally diverse. It may because cultural diversity in your area is low. Or it may be that other youth groups in your area are engaging more fully with the people in the community from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds. Or it may be that you target a specific group of young people based on other identified needs and this doesn't include Travellers or minority ethnic young people. To embed inclusion in youth work it is important to approach it with a community focus.

- Make contact with other youth groups in your community. Determine if other groups are more active in engaging with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds and Travellers than yours. The main concern should be that those from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds in your community, who would like to engage in youth work, are actually accessing a youth group. Try to discover why the

young people from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds have chosen one youth group over another.

- Run inclusion programmes in your youth group. This could include doing ongoing activities on identity and inclusion. It could also include doing visits and exchanges – especially with groups that are already engaging with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds

- Tell young people and parents from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds about your own youth group and make a dedicated effort to include them

Step 4

Determine what supports you need to put in place to meet the needs of anyone taking part in your organisation that has a disability or special requirements.

- Ask the young person or their parent/guardian who has told you about a disability what you can do to meet their needs.

- List the needs and put plans in place to make the necessary provisions

- Do the relevant disability awareness training based on your members identified needs with every member of staff and volunteers including staff that have minimal contact such as admin, security or maintenance staff. For example, in the case of an emergency shouting a warning is not appropriate if one of your members is Deaf, or flashing signs will not be appropriate for someone who is blind)

Collating the information within your own organisation for reporting purposes

For your ongoing planning needs you will need to store the information you have collected. Ideally you should work toward increasing your inclusiveness over a period of time, setting realistic goals and implementation plans. You may need to refer back to the information when planning new activities to see if it is appropriate. There are several ways of recording the information collected.

Simplest form of recording and using the data collected

When using these forms for your own reporting purposes it is not necessary to note every ethnic identity (for example in a database). A database entry could have just 4 options:

1. Irish

2. Irish Traveller

3. Minority ethnicity,

4. 2nd generation or mixed ethnicity. This is where a young person's ethnicity differs from their parents/guardians (2nd generation young people or young people with mixed ethnicity may have very different needs from 1st generation migrants)

These 4 divisions will give you a broad breakdown of statistics that you can use to assess cultural diversity in your organisation. It is also advisable to count the number of different ethnic backgrounds the young people come from.

More complex form of recording and using the data collected

Planning at a project or service level entails having a full, detailed, ethnic breakdown recorded just as a detailed special requirements assessment is important. This would entail having a hard copy file for each service user or member and a separate file listing the range of a) ethnic diversity in your organisation and b) special requirements of members in your groups.

A full listing of ethnic origins might grow in detail as your organisation becomes more diverse. However, a full list is very manageable on a database and its wealth of information is invaluable – especially for comparison with data sourced from schools or the Department of Education and Skills (DES). DES

uses place of birth as their data set on identity. This suits them as they are interested in English language skills so that they can plan for provision of services. Their statistics do not relate directly to ethnicity or identity as the children of migrants born in Ireland will not be included.

[i] This registration form was developed from one devised by Gurranabraher Youth Service (YWI Cork)

[ii] See www. http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/

Appendix 2

Develop your Action Plans

Use the Toolkit to develop an action plan.

Refer back to the checklists you have reviewed. Consider the explanations you gave to the 'no' and 'in progress' responses. Choose the areas where you feel you can make some concrete improvement in the:

- Short term, (1-2 weeks)

- Medium term (1-2 months)

- Long term (6 months – 1 year)

Write up an action plan – with

1. Timeframes for completing your chosen tasks,

2. Allocate a person responsible for ensuring these tasks are completed

3. Determine what supports need to be put in place to complete these tasks

Action Plan Template

Section (e.g. working with young LGBT people)	Description of action to be taken	Date for completion	Person responsible	Supports needed
Short term				
Mid term				
Long term				