

office of the minister for children and youth affairs annual report 2009



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Foreword by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

As Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, I welcome the second Annual Report of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA). As intended by Government, the expanded remit of the Office since my appointment in May 2008 has served to continually enhance and deepen the coordination of policy and services working with and for children and young people. The addition of Youth Affairs from the Department of Education and Science in January 2009 marked another important landmark in policy and service integration and coordination in the lives of children and young people.

As you will see from the breadth of work outlined in this report, the year 2009 has been an exceptionally busy one for my Office. I have worked with the Director General and staff of the OMCYA on a wide range of important issues. In addition, my attendance at Cabinet has allowed me to ensure that issues affecting children were at the heart of Government decision-making. Throughout the year, my Office has dealt with some of the most challenging issues facing our society in the area of child protection, both past and present. I have also brought forward important legislation, while maintaining a strong focus on improving and maintaining services provision on the ground. Together, all of this work should impact very positively on the lives of children and young people on a daily basis.

I had identified the area of child welfare and protection as an ongoing priority. My Office has responsibility for developing policy and legislation. Throughout the year, I have chaired regular meetings between the OMCYA and the HSE, with a focus on improvements and reform of services. Our overall goal must be to ensure that the lives of our most vulnerable children are protected. To this end, a review of compliance with the *Children First* national guidelines was undertaken by my Office. The process and the outcomes of the review were most instructive, concluding that some revisions to the guidelines are essential but overall the challenge is to ensure implementation at local level. An updated set of guidelines will be published shortly to take account of the issues raised in the review process. However, the key challenge that remains is to ensure that implementation at local level is uniform and of the highest possible standard. This will remain my key focus for the year ahead.

The Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (the Ryan Report) was published in May 2009 and looked at the litany of terrible wrongs inflicted on Irish children who were placed by the State in residential institutions run by religious orders. Following the publication of the Ryan Report, I was tasked with producing an *Implementation Plan* for the report's recommendations. This plan was accepted by Government and published in July 2009. In drawing up this plan, key stakeholders with particular knowledge and expertise in the area of child welfare and protection were consulted.

The *Implementation Plan* sets out 99 proposals to address each of the 20 recommendations in the Ryan Report, including proposals aimed at addressing the effects of past abuses, reforming service provision and ensuring that children and young people have a voice. It also includes proposals considered essential to further improve services to children in care, in detention and at risk.

I chair a high-level group to monitor the implementation of the actions specified in this *Implementation Plan*. The group includes representatives from the OMCYA, HSE, HIQA, Irish Youth Justice Service, Department of Education and Skills, and An Garda Síochána. The group meets twice a year and a progress report will be presented to Government each year.

The Report by Commission of Investigation into Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin (the Murphy Report) was published in November 2009. The Commission was established to report on the handling by Church and State authorities of a representative sample of allegations and suspicions of child sexual abuse against clerics operating under the aegis of the Archdiocese of Dublin over the period 1975-2004. While the Murphy Report



had a somewhat different focus than the Ryan Report, there are significant areas of commonality in terms of the lessons to be learned, including the need for improved coordination in the delivery of child welfare and protection services.

In 2009, the importance of ensuring that the voice of children and young people is central to policy considerations has continued to be of great importance to the OMCYA. Following on from the consultations conducted with teenagers on mental health in six locations around the country, a report was launched in June 2009, entitled *Teenage Mental Health: What Helps and What Hurts? Report on the outcome of consultations with teenagers on mental health*. The report gives significant insight into 'what hurts' or impacts negatively on teenage mental health and 'what helps' or impacts positively on their mental health. The findings of the consultation process have significantly enhanced engagement with policy-makers and service providers; in particular, the report informed a National Awareness Campaign on Mental Health, which was launched in the Autumn of 2009.

Also during the year, the OMCYA was delighted to partner with the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board (NPHDB) to undertake two days of consultations with children and young people on the design of the new children's hospital. The purpose of these events was to bring together children and young people who have experience of being in a hospital, either short term or long term, and to ask their views and opinions on hospital design and the way it runs. The report from this consultation process will influence the designers and planners from the very beginning of the building process.

In addition to these national consultations, my Office continues to support both Comhairle na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg, both of which continue to go from strength to strength.

Throughout 2009, the ongoing commitment of my Office to the research programme has continued to give an insightful picture of children and young people's lives. During the year, I was delighted to publish substantive results from Wave 1 of the child cohort of the study *Growing up in Ireland: The National Longitudinal Study of Children*. The report, entitled *The Lives of 9-Year-Olds*, provides policy-makers and service providers with important insights into the lives and well-being of children in Ireland today. While the long-term aim of this programme of research is 'to examine the factors that contribute to or undermine the well-being of children in contemporary Irish families', it remains my hope that the findings can begin to inform decision-making along the way. The study will continue to provide this data in the coming years and in 2010, I will be delighted to welcome the results of the birth cohort study as an important next step in this research process. Once again, I would like to thank the parents and children who have taken part in this study.

A Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children (JCCAC) was established in late 2007 to examine Government proposals to amend the Constitution in relation to children. The JCCAC has published two interim reports: the *First Interim Report* of Article 42(A).5.1 of the Proposed Amendment: Exchange of 'Soft Information' was published in September 2008; the *Second Interim Report* on absolute or strict liability in respect of sexual offences against or in connection with children was published on 7th May 2009. In 2009, the JCCAC commenced its deliberations on the family law issues raised in proposed Articles 42(A).1, 2, 3 and 4, dealing with the rights of children, intervention of the State where the parents have failed in their responsibility towards children, involuntary and voluntary adoption of children, and taking the best interests of the child into account in certain Court proceedings.

Significant progress has been made on the legislative programme of my Office in 2009. In January, the Adoption Bill 2009 was published and made steady progress through the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Bill was the end result of much consultation and consequently addressed many key issues in the area of adoption. The Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2009 was also published to deal specifically with the statutory jurisdiction of the High Court to hear applications by the HSE for Special Care Orders in respect of children whose welfare may require their detention in a special care unit. This Bill is also currently before the Houses of the Oireachtas. 2009 has also seen the commencement of work on the National Vetting Bureau Bill, which the



Government has identified as a priority; this legislation will address issues related to vetting of applications for employment and employees to protect children and vulnerable adults. In the context of the priority my Office is attaching to child protection, this development is very welcome and I look forward to taking this legislation forward.

2009 has also been a year for the continued roll-out and expansion of the multi-agency Children's Services Committees (CSCs). My Office was delighted to welcome 6 new CSCs into the programme and throughout 2009 all key stakeholders in each area have been working together to prepare for the development and implementation of a CSC in the coming months. The 4 model Children's Services Committees continued to implement their work plans during 2009, while also informing learning which has resulted in the development and publication of *A Toolkit* for the development of CSCs. This toolkit is an essential guide for the new CSCs.

Continued commitment to childcare and early years education has been a significant element of the work of my Office during 2009. The announcement in Budget 2009 of a free pre-school year for all children is a landmark development. Coupled with the ongoing progress in developing a workforce development plan for this sector, I am confident that these developments in policy and service provision will continue to enhance the overall quality and levels of services within early years education. Once again, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the County Childcare Committees and all those who work tirelessly to ensure that a high-quality standard of childcare is delivered in every local community throughout Ireland.

2009 has also been a very busy year in the Youth Work area. During the year, I prioritised safeguarding of front-line services and consolidation of existing youth work provision. An additional €19.87 million was also provided under Round 2 of the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund, which again included an expansion of the Fund to 4 newly included towns. Similarly, in the area of Youth Justice I am delighted to have secured ongoing provision of all key services.

The year 2009 has brought many challenges, but I am happy to say that it has also brought many successes. With the deepened coordination of policy and services possible through my Office, I believe we are on the right road to ensuring that effective, evidence-based and cross-cutting policy objectives are set and met. Most importantly, if we continue to work in this manner we can be assured that children and young people will benefit.

Barry Andrews, TD

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

Introduction by the OMCYA Director General

The year 2009 was a challenging one for the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) as two major reports on the systematic past abuse of children were published in the course of the year. *The Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse* (known as the Ryan Report) was published in May. *The Report by Commission of Investigation into Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin* (known as the Murphy Report) was published in November. Both reports highlighted a litany of past abuses perpetrated against children. Following publication of the Ryan Report, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews, TD, was tasked with producing an *Implementation Plan* to address each of the recommendations made in the Ryan Report. This plan was accepted by Government and published in July (OMCYA, 2009a) and in addition includes proposals considered essential to improve services to children in care, in detention and at risk. This *Implementation Plan* has become a major focus of the work of the OMCYA, with the Minister and his Office accepting the challenges highlighted in the Ryan and Murphy Reports as an opportunity to ensure that the lives of our most vulnerable children are protected.

2009 was also a productive year for the OMCYA in bringing greater coherence to policy-making for children in many aspects of their lives. All units in the OMCYA continued implementation of the National Children's Strategy under the three key goals – of giving children a voice in decision-making, of developing a greater understanding of children's lives and of improving policies and services for children.

In the area of child participation, consultations on mental health were conducted with teenagers in six locations around the country. Outcomes of these consultations were published in the report *Teenage Mental Health: What Helps and What Hurts? Report on the outcome of consultations with teenagers on mental health* and launched by Minister Andrews in June 2009 (OMCYA, 2009b).

In relation to children's research, results from the first wave of the child cohort of *Growing up in Ireland: The National Longitudinal Study of Children* were published in *The Lives of 9-Year-Olds* (OMCYA, 2009c). This report provides policy-makers and service providers with important insights into the lives and well-being of children in Ireland today.

A Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children (JCCAC) was established in late 2007 to examine Government proposals to amend the Constitution in relation to children. The JCCAC has published two interim reports – on 'soft information' (September 2008) and on absolute or strict liability in respect of sexual offences against or in connection with children (May 2009).

In the legislative arena, the Adoption Bill 2009 was published and was the end result of wide consultation. The Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2009 was also published and the National Vetting Bureau Bill was commenced.

During 2009, the work of developing Children's Services Committees (CSCs) progressed significantly, with 6 new CSCs coming into the programme and the publication of *Children's Services Committees: A Toolkit for the Development of a Committee* (OMCYA, 2009d).

Major developments took place in childcare and early years education, culminating in the announcement of a Free Pre-School Year Scheme for all children in Budget 2009.

In the youth work field, the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund was expanded. Minister Andrews also secured continued provision of all key services in the area of youth justice.



2009 saw significant progress in improved coordination of policies and services for children and in achieving the vision of the National Children's Strategy, which seeks to improve the lives of all children in Ireland. In this regard, I want to pay particular tribute in this Annual Report to my predecessor Ms. Sylva Langford, who retired in January 2010 and who led the Office with vision and commitment since its inception in 2005.

Mary Doyle

Director General

Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

1. About the OMCYA

Role of the OMCYA: A new way of working

In 2008, the role of the Office of the Minister for Children (OMC) was expanded to become the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA), as part of the Department of Health and Children. This Government decision builds on the progress made by the OMC and brings greater coherence to policy-making and service delivery for children. It realises the Government's commitment to improving the lives of all children in Ireland under the National Children's Strategy (Department of Health and Children, 2000).

In order to achieve this joined-up Government approach to the development of policy and delivery of services for children, an amalgamation of staff from various Government departments¹ has taken place. Staff working on childcare (from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform), on child welfare and child protection (from the Department of Health and Children), on youth affairs, such as youth work and youth services (from the Youth Affairs section of the Department of Education and Science) and from the former National Children's Office (NCO) have amalgamated to form the OMCYA. In addition, the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund was transferred from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The integration of all these Government programmes and services into the OMCYA is providing greater opportunities for a more integrated, cohesive and effective approach to addressing the needs of children and young people. All are working towards the single objective of ultimately delivering better outcomes for children.

The mandate given to the OMCYA by Government is to take a cross-cutting approach to issues, policies, services and structures for the achievement of better outcomes for children. This mandate was recognised in *Toward 2016*, which tasks the OMCYA with enabling all parts of the public service management to work strategically together, at national and local level, so as to achieve more effective and efficient delivery of children's services (Department of the Taoiseach, 2006).

The OMCYA focuses on harmonising policy issues that affect children in areas such as early childhood care and education, youth justice, child welfare and protection, children and young people's participation, research on children and young people, and cross-cutting initiatives for children.

The OMCYA supports the Minister in:

- implementing the National Children's Strategy (2000-2010);
- implementing the National Childcare Investment Programme (2006-2010);
- developing policy and legislation on child welfare and child protection;
- implementing the Children Act (2001);
- implementing the Youth Work Act (2001).

The OMCYA also maintains a general strategic oversight of bodies with responsibility for developing and delivering children's services.

¹ The names of some Government departments have changed since the establishment of the OMCYA. The names used here are those in use at the time.



Vision

The vision of the OMCYA is an Ireland 'where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential'.

Mission

The mission of the OMCYA is to put children and teenagers at the heart of Government policy through driving implementation of the National Children's Strategy, which commits to:

- giving children a voice in matters that affect their lives;
- gaining a better understanding of children's lives through evidence-based research;
- developing quality policies and delivering effective services for children.

Policy framework

The policy framework underpinning the work of the OMCYA is *The Agenda for Children's Services: A Policy Handbook* (OMC, 2007). This policy approach involves integrated delivery of services in partnership with children, young people, their families and their communities. *The Agenda* is accompanied by a series of *Reflective Questions* for policy-makers, HSE senior managers and front-line managers and practitioners, which assist them to engage in reflective practice and effective delivery, and to identify their own role within the national policy framework.

International work

During 2009, the OMCYA participated in important meetings of the European Forum on the Rights of the Child, which brings together key players – EU Member States, Ombudsmen for Children, Council of Europe, UNICEF, non-governmental organisations, civil society and other stakeholders – to promote the exchange of existing expertise, information, actions, results and good practices. The OMCYA also participated in the high-level meeting of the Permanent Intergovernmental Group *L'Europe de l'Enfance* in Stockholm in November. This meeting coincided with the EU celebration of the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Among the important policy issues discussed were the application of the Convention in EU Member States, the implications for all EU Member States of children and young people's increasing use of the Internet, and the possibilities for parents to combine work and family life from a child rights' perspective. Through engagement with these important international organisations and networks, and with the facilitation of the permanent representatives of the Irish Government abroad, the OMCYA continues to contribute to a range of important international developments.

In 2009, the OMCYA also co-hosted, with the Children's Rights Alliance and UNICEF, our own celebration in Dublin of the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, attended by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews, TD.

Work also continued during 2009 on the preparation of Ireland's joint 3rd and 4th Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This work will intensify in early 2010.

With the transfer of responsibility for Youth Affairs from the Department of Education and Science to the OMCYA in January 2009, the international work of the Office was broadened to include participation at EU Youth Council meetings, Youth Working and Youth in Action Programme meetings on youth matters and relevant preparation and follow-up. During 2009, a Resolution on a new EU Cooperation Framework for Youth (2010-2018) was negotiated and agreed.

2. Supporting and advancing best practice in participation by children and young people

The OMCYA has the lead role under the National Children's Strategy in ensuring that children and young people have a voice in the design, delivery and monitoring of services and policies that affect their lives, at national and local level. The OMCYA is responsible for overseeing the development and improvement of participation structures and works to ensure that seldom-heard children and young people are included in participation structures and projects.

The work of the OMCYA is based on the belief that children and young people are the citizens of today and not just the adults of tomorrow. Working with young people has enhanced our understanding of their needs, concerns and interests and has resulted in policies and practices that are more relevant and therefore more likely to be effective.

The OMCYA is working to become a centre of excellence for participation by children and young people in decision-making. Central to the success of this participation work is the collaborative interaction between participation and research expertise within the OMCYA, which ensures that best practice in young people's participation is a priority and that outcomes are robust and evidence-based.

Establishment of participation structures

In the last six years, the OMCYA has worked to ensure the establishment or consolidation of key structures for the participation of young people, including:

- Comhairle na nÓg (local child and youth councils);
- the Inclusion Programme, to ensure participation of seldom-heard young people;
- Dáil na nÓg (National Youth Parliament);
- student councils in post-primary schools;
- OMCYA Children and Young People's Forum.

In 2009, progress was made on the ongoing development of all these structures with the establishment of two important additional structures – the Children and Young People's Participation Support Team and the Children and Young People's Participation Partnership Committee (*see below*).

Children and Young People's Participation Support Team

In March 2009, the OMCYA established the Children and Young People's Participation Support Team and appointed Regional Participation Officers, based in Foróige and Youth Work Ireland. The role of the Participation Support Team is:

- to provide support for the development of effective Comhairle na nÓg under all 34 City/County Development Boards (CDBs) through driving implementation of actions outlined in the Comhairle na nÓg 2-Year Development Plan and future actions to be developed by the Children and Young People's Participation Partnership Committee (*see p. 6*);
- to support the operation and development of the Dáil na nÓg process;
- to support other participation initiatives by children and young people.



Children and Young People's Participation Partnership Committee

In 2009, the OMCYA established the Children and Young People's Participation Partnership Committee, which has strategic oversight of the Comhairle na nÓg 2-Year Development Plan and also has an oversight role in Dáil na nÓg and other children and young people's participation structures. The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) jointly chairs and supports the Partnership Committee with the OMCYA (see Appendix 1 for membership of committee).

The Partnership Committee replaced the Comhairle na nÓg Implementation Group (CIG), established in 2006, with continued involvement of many members of the CIG in the new committee. Government department membership has been increased substantially and the Partnership Committee now has representatives from the OMCYA, HSE, youth sector (NYCI, Foróige, Youth Work Ireland and other youth organisations), City and County Development Boards, and the Departments of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Education and Skills; Tourism, Culture and Sport; and Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, as well as young people and other key stakeholders. The Partnership Committee meets 4 times a year.

Comhairle na nÓg

Comhairle na nÓg is the name given to local child and youth councils, established under the National Children's Strategy in all 34 City and County Development Board areas of the country. An effective Comhairle na nÓg in every county will ensure that children and young people can participate in appropriate local and national decision-making. Delegates for the annual Dáil na nÓg (National Youth Parliament) are elected through their local Comhairle. The operation of the Comhairle na nÓg programme varies from county to county and many Comhairlí are in need of significant support. The development of effective Comhairlí throughout the country is a major priority of the OMCYA.

In 2009, the OMCYA hosted the first Annual Information, Training and Networking Day for all Comhairle na nÓg Coordinators, providing them with an opportunity to share best practice and address issues of common concern.

Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund

In 2007, the OMCYA established the Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund and an independent evaluation process. This scheme aims to ensure that Comhairle na nÓg operates according to best practice and provides enhanced opportunities for the participation of children and young people in local decision-making. The scheme has proved hugely popular: OMCYA expenditure in 2008-2009 as part of the Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund exceeded €560,000. In late 2009, the funding programme approved funding for the 2009-2010 period for 33 of the 34 Comhairlí.

The independent *Evaluation Report: Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund 2008-2009* (OMCYA, 2009e) highlights significant progress in terms of the number of young people participating, the positive experiences for young people, improved structured links to adult decision-makers and a much improved inclusion of the full age range of 12-18 year-olds. In this funding period, each Comhairle na nÓg was also required to improve the participation of seldom-heard young people. The evaluation report demonstrates significant progress in all of these areas and also makes recommendations for the future development of the Comhairle na nÓg programme.



Inclusion Programme

During 2007, the OMCYA established the Inclusion Programme to develop best practice in participation by providing new opportunities for seldom-heard young people² to become involved in decision-making structures. This decision was taken in recognition of the difficulties often faced by this group of young people in taking part effectively in Comhairle na nÓg or other decision-making forums. The aim of the Inclusion Programme is:

- to provide meaningful participative experiences for the young people involved in the programme;
- to identify good practice in enabling seldom-heard young people to take part in decision-making structures and processes.

The OMCYA invited a range of organisations to apply for funding under this programme. Seven organisations, which represent or work with seldom-heard young people, applied for funding to support the involvement of a number of young people in the OMCYA Children and Young People's Forum (CYPF), Comhairle na nÓg and other programmes or projects that involve children or young people in decision-making. Funding for this programme was continued into 2009. The funded organisations are:

- Belong To;
- Barnardos;
- FDYS Youth Work Ireland;
- Irish Wheelchair Association;
- Irish Association of Young People in Care;
- Inclusion Ireland;
- Pavee Point.

These organisations work with young Travellers, gay and lesbian young people, young people living in care, young people with physical and intellectual disabilities and young people from disadvantaged communities. The OMCYA supplies capacity-building for funded organisations and the programme is independently evaluated.

The OMCYA intends to capture the learning from this Inclusion Programme to ensure that an increasing number of seldom-heard young people can take part in decision-making structures and processes. The evaluation of the programme will be published in 2010 and will inform the further development of work in this area.

Dáil na nÓg

Dáil na nÓg is the annual national parliament for young people aged 12-18. The OMCYA is responsible for funding and overseeing Dáil na nÓg. Since 2003, a consortium – consisting of the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), Foróige and Youth Work Ireland – has organised Dáil na nÓg in cooperation with the OMCYA. Successive independent evaluations note that Dáil na nÓg has gone from strength to strength, with more challenging and contentious debate each year.

A total of 200 teenage delegates attended the 8th Annual Dáil na nÓg on 20th February 2009 in Croke Park, Dublin, and discussed the issues of physical health and mental health.

- The Top 3 recommendations voted by delegates on **physical health** were:
 - The cervical cancer vaccine should be made available free of charge for all 12-18 year-old girls.
 - All young people should have access to sex education, which is appropriate to individual needs, comprehensive and varied in delivery.
 - Physical Education (PE) should be prioritised and properly funded, both in and out of school.

² 'Seldom-heard' young people is a term used to describe young people who tend not to have many opportunities to have their voices heard, including young people with disabilities, from an economically disadvantaged or culturally different background, young people in care, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) young people, as well as those from more rural backgrounds and ethnic minorities.



- The Top 3 recommendations voted by delegates on **mental health** were:
 - A structured Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) course should be implemented for senior cycle students, incorporating positive mental health awareness and development of an on-line support service.
 - The establishment of mandatory mental health awareness workshops in all schools, to raise awareness about symptoms, supports and effects of mental health issues.
 - A nationwide awareness campaign to promote positive mental health, decrease the stigma, aimed at reducing the number of suicides among young people.

In an effort to make changes for young people in these areas, the Dáil na nÓg Council (representing each of the 34 Comhairle na nÓg) has followed up with policy-makers on the recommendations from Dáil na nÓg 2009. The Council has a 1-year term of office, meets once a month and is supported by the OMCYA and NYCI.

In addition to meeting with a wide range of relevant policy-makers, researchers and practitioners, members of the Dáil na nÓg Council also undertook informal surveys in their own schools on two subjects important to young people – Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and the implementation of SPHE. The findings from these informal surveys lead to the Council deciding to conduct formal structured surveys on both subjects through their local Comhairle na nÓg. In November and December, the Council worked with a professional researcher to design and undertake these surveys. The results will be available in early 2010 and will be published by the Council through the OMCYA at the end of its term of office.

Dáil na nÓg 2010 will take place on 5th March 2010.

Student Councils

Effective student councils in schools are cited in *Towards 2016* as an important measure for increasing participation in decision-making by young people. Thus, in 2007 the Department of Education and Science established the Second-level Support Service and appointed a Student Council Coordinator to work in collaboration with the Citizenship Education Support Team to provide information, resources and training to schools, aimed at principals, liaison teachers, planners, policy-makers, CSPE teachers and general staff.

During 2007, the OMC funded a resource in the Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) curriculum, entitled *Giving Young People a Voice: Student Councils in Schools* and developed by the City of Dublin VEC Curriculum Development Unit (OMC and CDU, 2007). Issued to all second-level schools, it promotes the rights of children and young people to a voice in matters that affect their lives, as guaranteed under the National Children's Strategy and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989). It also incorporates information about Dáil na nÓg and Comhairle na nÓg, and their potential links with student councils.

A significant outcome of this *Giving Young People a Voice* project was the development of a teaching and learning *Resource Pack* of the same name, issued to schools. The resource was produced to support and promote the concept that the establishment and development of an effective student council is a process which for students begins with curriculum-based materials. The establishment of a student council, or the improvement of an existing one, is the action project accompanying the resource pack.

The work carried out and the learning outcomes from the *Giving Young People a Voice* project has also informed the roll-out of a national programme of in-service provision for Student Council Liaison Teachers. Since September 2007, cluster meetings of teachers have taken place in education centres around the country, with a 20-member team from the Associate Student Council Support Team introducing them to the resource *Giving Young People a Voice*; providing information about student councils; sharing experiences; and promoting good practice as outlined in the resource and in *Student Councils: A Voice for Students* (OMC, 2002). Also, students of the post-graduate Diploma in Education at UCD and NUI Maynooth have



been participating in workshops based on *Giving Young People a Voice* as part of their CSPE Methodology course. These workshops focus on the various methodologies recommended to be used in classes and give new teachers an opportunity to try out the activities for themselves. The aim is to encourage them to embed teaching about student councils either into their CSPE classes or as a broader education programme in their schools.

An extensive training programme for both teachers and members of student councils is also underway, including school network days, school support meetings and development planning of policies in schools. In 2009 alone, the Support Service worked in 338 schools, with 440 teachers and 704 students. In addition, the Service undertook the first-ever student consultation on curriculum development.

In addition, work is currently underway to expand the student council website (www.studentcouncil.ie). Among its resources, it will contain downloadable documents and an interactive forum for teachers to share ideas and communicate with each another. Teachers who register with the website will be able to book courses online and receive e-mail alerts for upcoming events.

The Student Council Coordinator collaborates with the OMCYA to identify, promote and support mechanisms for linking student councils and Comhairle na nÓg (local youth councils, which act as the voice of children and young people in their local communities, see p. 6).

OMCYA Children and Young People's Forum

The OMCYA Children and Young People's Forum (CYPF) was established in 2004 to act as a reference panel and advise the OMCYA and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs about issues of concern to children and young people. There are 35 young people, aged 12-18, from all over the country on the CYPF. They are nominated through Comhairle na nÓg and organisations representing seldom-heard young people. Four representatives from the CYPF are members of the National Children's Advisory Council.

The CYPF has been an invaluable resource to the OMCYA and its members have been consulted on, or been involved in, many initiatives, such as:

- the design and content of *Teenspace: National Recreation Policy for Young People* (2005);
- the development of student council resources;
- tender evaluation committees for relevant projects;
- health service provision for teenagers;
- the Mid-term Review of the National Children's Strategy;
- the development of child and youth-friendly versions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- supporting national consultations with teenagers on alcohol misuse and mental health.

Consultations

The OMCYA provides opportunities for children and young people to contribute their views on issues of national and personal importance, and has conducted consultations with children and young people over the years on a range of issues, including:

- the development of the Children's Code of Advertising (2004);
- the development of *Teenspace: National Recreation Policy for Young People* (2005);
- development of a National Set of Child Well-being Indicators (2005);
- the development of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2006);
- the age of consent for sexual activity (2006);
- the development of the Irish Youth Justice Strategy (2007);
- the misuse of alcohol among young people (2007);
- mental health consultations with teenagers (2008).



In 2009, the report from the mental health consultations was launched by Minister Barry Andrews, TD, and Minister of State with Responsibility for Equality, Disability and Mental Health, John Moloney, TD (OMCYA, 2009b). The outcomes of the consultations are already informing the development of an advertising and on-line public awareness campaign on mental health aimed at teenagers. This campaign is funded and spearheaded by the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP), which is part of the HSE.

Also in 2009, the OMCYA worked in partnership with the board of the National Paediatric Hospital to carry out consultations with children on the design of the National Children's Hospital of Ireland. The consultation event gave children an opportunity to have an input into the design of core elements of the hospital in the early stages and will be followed up with a report on the process and the establishment of an ongoing Children's Advisory Council.

Following on from a recommendation in the 2009 *Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse* (known as the Ryan Report), Justice Ryan recommended that '*children in care should be able to communicate without fear*'. The OMCYA commenced the planning phase for a national consultation process with children living in the care of the State – the first of its kind – including establishment of an oversight committee of key stakeholders to guide and inform the process. The consultations will begin in early 2010 and a report will be available in late 2010/early 2011.

Reports of the consultations with teenagers on the age of consent for sexual activity (2006), solutions to the misuse of alcohol among young people (2007) and mental health consultations with teenagers (2008) are all available on the OMCYA website (www.omcya.ie) under 'Publications', as are all OMCYA publications and research reports.

3. Gaining a better understanding of children's lives through evidence-based research

The National Children's Strategy states that '*children's lives will be better understood; that their lives will benefit from evaluation, research and information on their needs and rights, and the effectiveness of services available to them*'. Accordingly, the OMCYA has set up a Children's Research Programme, the objectives of which are:

- to build up a more coherent understanding of children's development and needs among those working with children;
- to develop an evidence-based approach to decision-making at all levels, down to the point of delivery;
- to improve the communication, production and dissemination of research and information;
- to improve evaluation and monitoring of children's services.

These objectives are being met through a number of different research programmes, including:

- **Commissioned research**, such as *Growing up in Ireland: The National Longitudinal Study of Children* and other commissioned research studies.
- **Capacity-building**, based on the award of Masters, PhD and research placement scholarships within the OMCYA.
- **Developing a data infrastructure**, most notably through the publication of the biennial report *State of the Nation's Children*, the development and management of a database on children's research (www.childrensdatabase.ie) and the development of a National Data and Research Strategy on Children's Lives.

Commissioned research programme

Growing up in Ireland: The National Longitudinal Study of Children

The largest study commissioned by the OMCYA to date under its research programme is the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland, entitled *Growing up in Ireland*. The aim of this Government-funded initiative, which is being carried out by a consortium led by the Economic and Social Research Institute and Trinity College Dublin, is '*to examine the factors that contribute to or undermine the well-being of children in contemporary Irish families and, through this, contribute to the setting of effective and responsive policies relating to children and to the design of services for children and their families*'.

Since this study was commissioned in 2006, the first wave of fieldwork (both quantitative and qualitative) has been completed for both cohorts of young children (approximately 11,100 infants and 8,500 9-year olds). Preliminary results were launched in July 2009. More substantive results were published in December 2009 in a report entitled *The Lives of 9-Year-Olds*. These results (available to download at www.growingup.ie) include the following:

- The majority (82%) of 9-year-olds lived in two-parent families.
- The majority of mothers (77%) and fathers (68%) of 9-year-olds displayed an authoritative parenting style – considered to be the optimal parenting style.
- The majority of mothers reported that their 9-year-old was in good health – 73% of 9-year-olds were reported to be 'very healthy' and 25% were reported to be 'healthy with a few minor problems'.
- 75% of 9-year-olds had a body mass index (BMI) that would be considered within the normal range; 19% were overweight and 7% were obese.
- Just over three-quarters of 9-year-olds had experienced some form of stressful life event. The most common were death of a close family member (43%), moving house (42%) and divorce/separation of parents (15%).



- On average, 9-year-olds missed 6.4 days from school in the previous year.
- 40% of 9-year-olds reported being a victim of bullying in the previous year.
- 95% of 9-year-olds said that they felt safe in their locality and 77% said there were places for children to play safely near their home.
- 89% of 9-year-olds reported that they had a computer in their home.

Preliminary results from Wave 1 of the infant cohort and more substantive results are currently being prepared for release in 2010. The anonymised data from Wave 1 of the study are due to be made available to bona-fide researchers through a data archive from early 2010. Additional reports are currently being prepared from Wave 1 fieldwork for release in 2010.

Instrumentation for Wave 2 fieldwork (both quantitative and qualitative) for both cohorts will be pilot-tested throughout 2010. It is anticipated that Wave 2 fieldwork (both quantitative and qualitative) for the infant cohort (at age 3) will commence from January 2011 and Wave 2 fieldwork for the child cohort (at age 13) will commence from July 2011.

National Children's Strategy Research Programme

In addition to the *Growing up in Ireland* study, the OMCYA commissions and supports research into specific areas of children's lives. In 2009, the following studies were completed under this programme:

- Children's Perspectives on Parenting Styles and Discipline.
- Parents' Perspectives on Parenting Styles and Discipline.
- Public Library Services for Children and Young People in Ireland.
- Children as Young Carers.
- Child Health Research in Ireland: A Directory.

The following research studies commissioned under the OMCYA Research Programme 2006-2009 were published in 2009:

- *Ethics Committees and Ethics Approval for Children's Research in Ireland*.
Authors: Heike Felzmann, Jane Sixsmith, Siobhan O'Higgins, Sorcha Ní Chonnactaigh and Saoirse Nic Gabhainn.
- *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Ireland 2006: Middle Childhood Study: Socio-demographic patterns in the health behaviours, risk behaviours, health outcomes and social contexts of young people's health*.
Authors: Michal Molcho, Colette Kelly and Saoirse Nic Gabhainn.

The following studies are currently underway:

- Post-Separation Parenting: A study of parent-child contact agreements and arrangements.
- A Follow-up Study on the educational and social support experiences of young people in long-term foster care.
- Young People's Homeless Pathways: A longitudinal perspective: Phase 3 (jointly funded by the OMCYA and the Homeless Agency).

In addition to these commissioned reports, a Working Group has been established with the aim of developing good practice guidelines in the ethical review of children's research on behalf of the OMCYA, to be published in 2010. The Working Group will aim to provide specific information on the following:

- relevant legal obligations and policy commitments;
- best practice procedures for achieving informed consent and assent;
- acceptable risk;
- confidentiality requirements;
- best practice in relation to methodologies and research settings, including the recruitment of children and the use of appropriate research methods and personnel.



Capacity-building research programme

The OMCYA considers that there is a need to further develop capacity in the area of children's research. In 2009, funding was made available for this purpose to the Children's Research Centre in Trinity College, Dublin (TCD). The Centre is unique in Ireland in terms of its expertise in children's research and commitment to mentoring and facilitating novice researchers in this area. The OMCYA funding also contributed to the development of the new full-time structured PhD programme in Child and Youth Research, which is offered by the Children's Research Centre, TCD, and the National University of Ireland, Galway, as part of their emerging Life-Course Studies research and education agenda.

As part of its capacity-building research programme, the OMCYA also provides funding for Masters and PhD students, and offers them a placement programme within the OMCYA.

National Children's Strategy Research Fellowships

The National Children's Strategy Research Scholarship Scheme was established in 2001 with the aim of developing research capacity in relation to children and supporting research directly related to the National Children's Strategy. Under this scheme, successful applicants receive an annual maintenance grant of €16,000 and also have their university fees paid in full by the OMCYA. In 2009, scholarships were awarded for the following:

- **Psychology:** Feeling Heard and Validated: Children and adolescents' experiences of self-harm and suicidal behaviour within the framework of their life stories (Doctoral Scholarship);
- **Education:** Diversity, Identity and Belonging: The critical role of the home-school relationship in the inclusion of migrant children in Irish primary schools (Doctoral Scholarship);
- **Culture:** The influence of the body in migrant and local boys' interactions within the masculine hierarchy of four inner city schools (Doctoral Scholarship).

To date, 31 scholarships have been awarded. A detailed abstract of each thesis can be found on the OMCYA website (www.omcya.ie).

National Children's Strategy Research Placements

In 2004, the National Children's Strategy Research Scholarship Scheme was extended to include research placement awards, which give students the opportunity to work in the OMCYA. Two research placements were awarded in 2009, bringing to 14 the total number of placements since 2004.

Developing a data infrastructure

A third strand of the OMCYA's research programme is concerned with the building and development of a data infrastructure around children's lives. Three key actions are involved:

- reporting the *State of the Nation's Children* on a biennial basis;
- the development and maintenance of the database on children's research (www.childrensdatabase.ie);
- developing a National Data and Research Strategy on Children's Lives in Ireland.



Report on the *State of the Nation's Children*

Ireland's first and second *State of the Nation's Children* reports were launched in 2006 and 2008 respectively. These reports provide a description of the well-being of children and young people in Ireland and set out a benchmark for developments in the future. The reports are based on a national set of child well-being indicators developed in 2005 (OMC, 2005). The *State of the Nation's Children* reports are compiled by the OMCYA Research Division, in association with the Central Statistics Office and the Health Promotion Research Centre at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Background documentation relating to this development and these reports are available on the OMCYA website (www.omcya.ie). The 2008 report is also available to download in an accessible format on a single indicator basis from <http://childrensdatabase.ie/sonc2008/>

The next *State of the Nation's Children* report will be published in 2010.

Database on children's research

Throughout 2009, the OMCYA's research website, www.childrensdatabase.ie, was further developed. The primary focus of this database on children's research is to provide a resource of information for policy-makers, Government departments, academics, voluntary organisations and the general public. The website holds a collection of full-text policy documents dating from 1996 to the present (produced by Irish Government departments and approximately 70 State agencies) on issues that directly affect children. The database is fully indexed and contains abstracts and full publication details for each item, including the availability of Irish language and disabled access versions.

In addition, the website provides access to a collection of other databases, specialist libraries and Irish, European and international resources on children's lives. Links to information are organised according to the Schedule of Objectives in the National Children's Strategy.

All resources on www.childrensdatabase.ie are free of charge, with the exception of clearly identified resources that are licensed for the use of OMCYA staff (marked as 'access for OMCYA only').

National Data and Research Strategy on Children's Lives

The purpose of the National Data and Research Strategy on Children's Lives is to set out the vision, goals, principles and actions to guide and support the collection, compilation and dissemination of data, statistics and research on children, and will facilitate the utilisation of good quality, easily accessible, internationally comparable information about the lives of children in Ireland.

The formation of an evidence base for the National Data and Research Strategy had begun in 2008 through an extensive review of policy recommendations and data sources relating to children's lives. During 2009, the evidence base was further developed through a public consultation process held in the March-April period. Following the completion of the consultation, a detailed analysis of policy recommendations, existing data sources and consultation responses was conducted, to identify current needs and gaps in provision of data and research on children's lives. An extensive set of recommendations was drafted under 10 thematic headings based on the 'whole child perspective'. In late 2009, two consultation workshops were conducted with policy-makers and researchers in the Health and Education sectors to begin to identify priority areas and to identify any recent developments that should be taken into account in formulating recommendations. These workshops were followed by further bilateral consultations with key agencies in order to agree priorities for implementation and to agree the starting points of an action plan based on the draft recommendations. This work is continuing into early 2010, at which time a revised set of recommendations with agreed actions will be produced for inclusion in the final strategy document.

4. Developing quality policies and a legislative framework for children's services

The Agenda for Children's Services: A Policy Handbook

Published in December 2007, *The Agenda for Children's Services: A Policy Handbook* reflects a fundamental change in how Government policy on children is formulated and delivered (OMC, 2007). The policy approach outlined in *The Agenda* involves integrated delivery of services in partnership with children, young people, their families and their communities. The core principle of the policy is the provision of health and social services based on supporting the child within the family and the local community.

The Agenda was published with a series of *Reflective Questions* booklets for policy-makers, HSE senior managers and front-line managers and practitioners. These questions will assist people working in any part of the children's health and social services system to check and possibly change the way they work in the light of learning from experience. The questions also assist individuals to understand where their own work fits into the wider system and to ensure that their work is effectively linked with that of other stakeholders in delivering better outcomes for children and families.

An important aspect of *The Agenda* is the setting out of 7 National Service Outcomes for Children in Ireland, namely: that our children should be – healthy, both physically and mentally; supported in active learning; safe from accidental and intentional harm; economically secure; secure in the immediate and wider physical environment; part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and the community; and included and participating in society. The HSE, in conjunction with the OMCYA, commenced development of an operational policy implementation plan for *The Agenda* in relation to its child and family support approach, linked to the implementation of a Knowledge Management Strategy.

Monitoring the National Children's Strategy

The OMCYA has the lead role in monitoring implementation of the National Children's Strategy. Monitoring mechanisms continue to evolve since the publication of the strategy in 2000. Monitoring takes the form of reports and regular updates on commitments made in the Programme for Government, *Towards 2016*, and under international conventions, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Other ad hoc reporting is produced as required. The establishment of the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group is also relevant in this regard (*membership listed in Appendix 2*).

Child Welfare and Protection Policy

The role of the OMCYA in child welfare and protection is to develop the policy and legislative framework for care services for children and to work effectively with the Health Service Executive (HSE) to ensure implementation of this framework in the delivery of services. The development of legislation and policies that ensure quality services are provided to children is of benefit to society as a whole, but in particular to those children and their families who require support and assistance at vulnerable times in their lives. The implementation and monitoring of these policies, with the child's best interests and welfare as the main guiding principle, should help us to enable children in society to reach their potential and live in a safer and happier environment.



Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse and Implementation Plan

The *Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse* (known as the Ryan Report) was published in May 2009. Following its publication, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews, TD, was tasked with producing an *Implementation Plan* for the report's recommendations. This plan was accepted by Government and published in July 2009 (OMCYA, 2009a). In drawing up this action plan, key stakeholders with particular knowledge and expertise in the area of child welfare and protection were consulted.

The *Implementation Plan* sets out 99 proposals to address each of the 20 recommendations in the Ryan Report and also includes proposals considered essential to further improve services to children in care, in detention and at risk. The following are among the proposals aimed at addressing the effects of past abuses, reforming service provision and ensuring that children and young people have a voice:

- Erecting a memorial to victims of abuse in institutions.
- Improving availability of counselling and educational services – with the National Counselling Service to purchase additional therapy services and to be exempt from the public service moratorium on recruitment and replacement of staff.
- Reviewing and fully implementing a robust child care policy framework.
- Audit of current resources and need to be undertaken by the HSE in order to provide effective services.
- Independent inspections of all children's residential centres, including those for children with a disability and separated children seeking asylum, by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).
- Ensuring all children in care have an allocated social worker and care plan.
- Filling of 270 social worker posts, which are currently vacant.
- Provision of aftercare services to all children leaving care in all instances where the professional judgement of the allocated social worker determines it is required.
- Strengthening of the *Children First* national guidelines such that staff of all publicly funded bodies will have a duty to comply with and implement these guidelines. (An updated edition of *Children First* was published on the OMCYA website in December 2009.)
- Putting in place an out-of-hours social work crisis intervention service, to be piloted by the HSE in two areas.
- Training for all professionals who deal with children to include family support and child protection issues.

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is chairing a high-level group to monitor the implementation of the actions specified in this *Implementation Plan*. The group includes representatives from the OMCYA, HSE, HIQA, Irish Youth Justice Service, Department of Education and Skills, and An Garda Síochána. The group will meet twice a year and a progress report will be presented to Government each year.

Review of *Children First* national guidelines

The *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* were originally published in 1999 by the Department of Health and Children. Since that time, they have operated as the overarching national guidelines for all individuals and agencies that come into contact with children. The aim of *Children First* is to give direction to the identification, investigation, assessment, reporting, treatment and management of child abuse.

The guidelines have helped to inform the development of the various child protection guidelines and practices currently operating across sectors with responsibility for children, including health, education, justice, sports, youth work, leisure, community and voluntary organisations, and the faith-based sector.

In response to the publication of the Ferns Report, a national review of compliance with the *Children First* national guidelines by State bodies and NGOs was conducted by the OMC in partnership with all relevant



Government departments. The key finding of this review was that, in general, difficulties and variations in relation to implementation of *Children First* have arisen as a result of local variation and *not* from fundamental difficulties with the guidelines themselves.

The *Children First* national guidelines were updated in late 2009 and revised in light of the national review (OMCYA, 2009f). The content has been edited to make it more user-friendly and to provide greater clarity and guidance for individuals and organisations in identifying and responding appropriately to child abuse. The guidelines reflect the significant changes since 1999 to the service delivery system and to the policy and legislative framework. In particular, they take account of the establishment of the HSE, issues raised in child protection reports and reviews, the Ombudsman for Children's recent observations in relation to the revised guidelines, and the development of recent HIQA guidance for the HSE in respect of reviews of serious incidents.

The updated *Children First* national guidelines stress that the *responsibility for child protection lies across all organisations* and that, whilst the HSE and the Gardaí have particular roles in assessment and prosecution of allegations, *working across sectors is essential to good outcomes*. The revised guidelines were placed on the OMCYA website in December 2009. Their formal publication will be accompanied by an implementation assurance framework, currently being developed by the OMCYA in conjunction with other key stakeholders.

Child welfare and protection work in 2009

The Child Welfare and Protection Policy Unit of the OMCYA undertook additional work in the following key areas during 2009:

- The drafting of a national policy in relation to the placement of children aged 12 years and under in the care or custody of the Health Service Executive (HSE).
- Significant work was undertaken towards the development of a statutory framework to underpin improvements in management of services for children before the Courts for care and detention services.
- Progress was made in respect of improvements in residential care for special care/high support services in partnership with the HSE.
- The OMCYA, in partnership with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) in Northern Ireland, promotes North/South cooperation in the area of child welfare and protection. Among the issues being progressed are:
 - vetting and barring;
 - Internet safety;
 - protocol for movement of children/vulnerable families across borders;
 - All-Ireland media awareness and research.
- The OMCYA and DHSSPS jointly chair a Steering Group that is overseeing the work of 5 sub-groups in this North/South cooperation area.
- Liaised closely with the new National Care Group Leader for Child and Family Social Services within the HSE.
- Assisted with the development of the Joint Garda/HSE Protocol on missing children.
- The Minister referred the Diocese of Cloyne to the Commission of Investigation (into the Dublin Archdiocese). Following this, there was a renewed engagement on behalf of Church authorities to supply material for HSE audit purposes. Meetings between Church and HSE officials were facilitated by the OMCYA. The HSE audit of Catholic Diocese and religious orders is ongoing.
- Supported the Minister in meetings arranged with child protection social workers around the country.
- Continued to liaise with the Chief State Solicitor's Office on the resolution of outstanding Judicial Review and other cases.
- The Dublin Archdiocese Commission produced its report – the OMCYA has been examining the report from a child protection perspective.



Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2009

The Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2009 was published in 2009 and is currently before the Houses of the Oireachtas. It provides for the High Court to have statutory jurisdiction to hear applications by the HSE for Special Care Orders in respect of children where their welfare may require their detention in a special care unit.

Special care involves the civil detention of a child in the interest of his or her welfare and protection in a special care unit where educational and therapeutic supports are provided in a secure environment. Special care is provided where it is in the best interests of the child and as a last resort when other forms of residential or community care are considered to be unsuitable. The objective of special care is to provide a stabilising period of planned care that will enable a child to return to less secure care as soon as possible or to return home.

The Bill sets out the processes to be followed from consideration of the child for special care, the granting of the order, the care of the child under the order, to the discharge of the order. The Bill provides for an amendment to the Health Act 2007, which will apply the inspection provisions of that Act to special care units.

The Bill also provides for the dissolution of the Children Acts Advisory Board (CAAB) in accordance with Government policy in relation to efficiency savings and the need for the rationalisation of State agencies.

Adoption

In 2009, the OMCYA worked closely with the Adoption Board and the HSE on developments in adoption services. The Adoption Bill was published in 2009 and during the course of the year was progressed through the relevant stages in both the Dáil and Seanad. The OMCYA was also actively engaged in preparations for the ratification of the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption and the establishment of the new Adoption Authority of Ireland, which is provided for in the new adoption legislation.

National Vetting Bureau Bill

Work commenced in 2009 on the National Vetting Bureau Bill, which has been given Government priority. The legislation will provide a statutory basis for the vetting of applicants for employment and employees to protect children and vulnerable adults. It will provide for the establishment of a National Vetting Bureau for the collection and exchange of both 'hard' and 'soft' information for vetting purposes.

Constitutional Referendum on Children

A Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children (JCCAC) was established in late 2007 to examine Government proposals to amend the Constitution in relation to children.

The JCCAC has published two interim reports: the *First Interim Report* on Article 42(A).5.1 of the Proposed Amendment: Exchange of 'Soft Information' was published in September 2008; the *Second Interim Report* on absolute or strict liability in respect of sexual offences against or in connection with children was published on 7th May 2009. Work on legislation commenced in 2009 in both the OMCYA and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to give effect to the proposals contained in both reports.

In 2009, the Committee commenced its deliberations on the family law issues raised in proposed Articles 42(A).1, 2, 3 and 4, dealing with the rights of children, intervention of the State where the parents have failed in their responsibility towards children, involuntary and voluntary adoption of children, and taking the best interests of the child into account in certain Court proceedings.

5. Improving implementation of services and interventions for children at local level

National Children's Strategy Implementation Group and Children's Services Committees

The National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG) is chaired by the OMCYA and its members are representatives drawn from relevant Government departments, the HSE, local authorities, the education sector and other key agencies (see *Appendix 2*). During 2009, the NCSIG continued its work on overseeing the roll-out and expansion of the multi-agency Children's Services Committee (CSCs) initiative. The CSCs are being established in order to promote integrated, locally led, strategic planning for children's services in order to secure better outcomes for children and families.

The 4 existing CSCs – set up in 2007 in Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Donegal County Council and Limerick City Council – continued to implement their work plans during 2009 and included actions to improve:

- interagency information/data sharing;
- educational outcomes;
- child health and well-being;
- safety of children and families within their communities;
- child care;
- participation of children and young people;
- economic security.

The implementation of these plans is being monitored by the NCSIG. Learning from the set-up and operation of these 4 CSCs has informed the most effective way of establishing new CSCs. One result of this learning was the publication of *Children's Services Committees: A Toolkit for the Development of a Committee* (OMCYA, 2009d), to assist the establishment of new CSCs around the country. The *Toolkit* document will be revised and updated as more learning emerges.

Following a call in 2008, 6 new CSCs (in Carlow, Fingal, Kerry, Kildare, Longford/Westmeath and Meath) have signed up and are in the pre-implementation phase of developing a CSC. Newly forming committees have been reflecting upon and agreeing an approach to the key constructs and concepts of driving the rationale for forming a CSC before any planning or implementation starts to occur.

Supporting the youth sector in providing effective youth work opportunities and youth services for young people

Some €48 million was provided in 2009 to support the delivery of a range of youth work programmes and youth services for all young people, including those from disadvantaged communities, by the voluntary youth work sector. The focus of this financial support in 2009 was on the consolidation of existing youth work provision and on the safeguarding of front-line programmes, services and jobs, particularly in disadvantaged communities, through the Youth Service Grant Scheme, Special Projects for Youth, Youth Information Centres and the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund, as well as other initiatives such as the National Youth Health Programme, European Youth in Action Programme and Gaisce – the President's Award.



In addition, €19.87 million was provided under the Round 2 funding stream of the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund (YPFSF) – €17.361m for current funding and €2.509m for capital funding. This included some €1 million to assist in the development of youth facilities and to support a range of services under the expansion of the YPFSF to the 4 newly included towns of Arklow, Athlone, Dundalk and Wexford. In addition, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the YPFSF, supported by the HSE and FÁS, developed a Coach Training Programme to benefit schools and youth groups in addressing unemployment and associated mental health issues.

Completion of the Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work and implementation strategy for its roll-out

A key achievement for the OMCYA in 2009 was the finalisation of the Quality Standards Framework (QSF) for Youth Work and the development of an implementation strategy for its roll-out nationally in 2010. During 2009, a pilot of the QSF was reviewed by the youth work sector and the framework document finalised. The QSF is primarily a support and development tool and provides services and organisations with the opportunity to articulate through a common language their youth work practice. It also provides a structured framework through which to assess, indicate and enhance their work.

National Youth Work Advisory Committee

The National Youth Work Advisory Committee (NYWAC) is made up of equal representation of statutory and voluntary youth work interests and appointed by the Minister for Health and Children under the Youth Work Act 2001 (see *Appendix 3*). It has an important role in advising the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs on youth work policies from a cross-sectoral perspective and has contributed to a number of policy developments in 2009, including the development of the Quality Standards Framework (QSF) for Youth Work (see *above*).

Prevention and Early Intervention Programme for Children

Oversight and management of the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme for Children (PEIPC) was maintained by the OMCYA in 2009. The purpose of this programme, with an overall investment of €18 million provided jointly by the Government and the Atlantic Philanthropies, is to examine innovative measures for improving outcomes for children in an integrated way, based on evidence of need in the community and an evidence-based approach to 'what works'. The funds have been committed to three projects:

- Childhood Development Initiative – A place for children in Tallaght West;
- Preparing for life (Northside communities of Belcamp, Darndale and Moatview);
- Youngballymun.

By the end of 2009, the majority of programme activities across all project sites had commenced. In parallel with these developments, evaluation frameworks for two of the sites were completed and appropriate contracts were either signed or awaiting signature. An evaluation framework for the remaining project was nearing completion, with support and input from an international panel of experts, the OMCYA and the Atlantic Philanthropies.

A key element of the PEIPC will be the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of both the outcomes of the activities undertaken and learning from the individual projects, thus providing an important input to policy and service development.



Centre for Effective Services

The Centre for Effective Services (CES) – set up in 2008 to promote evidence-based policy and practice in child and family services across the island of Ireland – continued the recruitment of key team members in 2009. The work programme relating to children included familiarisation with key priority projects, development of a diagnostic tool, commencement of a learning report on Children's Services Committees (CSCs) and assistance to the OMCYA on the preparation of a 3-year development plan for CSCs.

National Play Policy/National Recreation Policy

The National Play and Recreation Resource Centre (NPRRC) promoted Sunday, 5th July 2009 as National Play Day (for 0-12 year-olds) to increase public awareness of the benefits of play for children's development. A National Recreation Day (for 12-18 year-olds) was also promoted on Saturday, 26th September to raise awareness of the importance of recreation for young people.

The OMCYA continued support for the Playbus Measure, through funds made available under the Dormant Accounts Fund, for 5 local Playbus schemes. This measure is intended to provide interventions that support the family unit, by providing play development and parenting development outreach services to children and their parents experiencing social exclusion in disadvantaged and isolated areas.

The development of a framework for youth cafés was a key area of activity in 2009. Research was carried out by the National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway on behalf of the National Children's Advisory Council and a draft report was submitted to the Minister for his consideration. The aim of this work is to ensure that funding is targeted and coordinated most effectively on a model (or models) of youth cafés that meets the needs of young people themselves. It will also ensure that any funding that may be available will augment, without displacing, existing interagency resources. NUI Galway was also requested to prepare a Toolkit and a 'How to set up and run' guide to support groups establishing youth cafés, dealing with issues such as guiding principles for youth cafés, practical setting-up and operational matters, advice and tips on the day-to-day management and ongoing development of a youth café. These publications will be available in 2010.

6. Facilitating the provision of childcare supports for families, particularly those in disadvantaged areas

National Childcare Investment Programme 2006 – 2010

The OMCYA is responsible for managing the implementation of the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) 2006-2010. The NCIP is part of the National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010, which commits to continuing the development of a quality infrastructure for childcare.

The original allocation to the NCIP was €575 million over 5 years, of which €358 million was in respect of capital. The capital allocation is now €222 million due to the closure of the programme to new applicants in 2009-2010.

By the end of 2008, approximately €180 million of the NCIP's capital allocation had been committed, with almost €100m drawn down. With the exception of a small number of priority projects approved early in 2009, no further commitments are expected to be made in respect of capital grant funding under the NCIP. €60 million in capital funding was allocated for 2009; of this, €52m was spent on capital grants. Capital funding of €30 million to cover the remaining commitments has been allocated in 2010. Due to the €8m underspend in 2009, and the timeframe within which these projects mature, some capital commitments may roll over into 2011 expenditure. The capital commitments in place up to the end of 2008 are expected to result in the creation of 27,000 additional childcare places.

The bulk of the NCIP current funding is expended on the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (*see below*).

Community Childcare Subvention Scheme

The framework for the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) was finalised in December 2007 and it was introduced with effect from January 2008. The CCSS is funded under the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) and has a total allocation of almost €160 million over the 3-year period 2008-2010. The funding supports community-based childcare providers, enabling them to charge reduced childcare fees to disadvantaged parents. The CCSS is designed to be transparent and effective in targeting disadvantaged parents through the implementation of tiered fee structures based on the ability of parents to pay.

From September 2010, the follow-on scheme will maintain the current rate of subvention payments for parents in receipt of social welfare payments and increase the rates payable for low-income working parents and parents accessing employment and training.

The NCIP also supports quality childcare initiatives, including the provision of funding to the 33 City and County Childcare Committees which provide local support to the childcare sector (including applicants for NCIP funding). A number of national voluntary childcare organisations were funded under the NCIP to facilitate quality improvements in the sector through the provision of training and other supports.



Childcare Regulations

The Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No. 2) Regulations 2006 came into effect in September 2007 and the OMCYA liaised closely with the HSE to facilitate their implementation in an effective and consistent way. A Working Group on National Childcare Standards was established by the OMCYA in late 2007 to develop a set of National Childcare Standards for service users and providers in accordance with the 2006 Regulations. The Group's work is almost complete.

National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee

The National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee (NCCC), established in 2000 and chaired by the OMCYA, provides a national forum for the childcare sector (*see Appendix 4 for membership of committee*). The role of the NCCC is to advise and assist the OMCYA in relation to the National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010 and in relation to the development of a coordinated national approach to childcare provision.

Early Childcare Supplement

Amendments to the Early Childcare Supplement (ECS) arising from Budget 2009 provide for the reduction in the age limit for eligibility from 6 years to 5½ years, and a change in the frequency of payment from quarterly to monthly. Both these changes came into effect in January 2009.

Further changes to the ECS Scheme took effect from 1st March 2009, providing for a reduction in the age limit from 5½ years to 5 years, and for a reduction in the per annum payment. The rate of payment was further reduced (to half-rate) with effect from 1st May 2009. The ECS Scheme was abolished at the end of 2009, to be replaced by a new scheme to provide for a free pre-school year in early childhood care and education from January 2010 (*see below*).

Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme was announced in April 2009 and will provide all children with access to a free pre-school year in the key developmental period prior to starting school. Children will be eligible to avail of the ECCE Scheme where they are aged between 3 years 3 months and 4 years 6 months in September of the relevant year. Some 4,000 services were entered into contract by year end 2009.

7. Developing policy for early childhood education

The Early Years Education Policy Unit is an executive office of the Department of Education and Skills, established to improve the quality of educational provision in childcare settings. The co-location of this Unit in the OMCYA is to ensure that policy developments in the early childhood sector are developed within an overall strategic policy framework for children.

Ireland operates a split system of governance, with the Department of Education and Skills having responsibility for early childhood education provision in targeted initiatives for 'at risk of educational disadvantage' children aged 3-4 (e.g. Early Start and Traveller Pre-schools) and the Infant Classes in primary schools catering for children aged 4-6.

Childcare provision for children aged from birth onwards is governed by the OMCYA, which regulates and inspects a diverse range of private, community and voluntary service provision for early childhood education.

The April 2009 Budget announcement of a free pre-school year for all children is a landmark development in the provision of early childhood care and education services. While the scheme is funded through the OMCYA, the Department of Education and Skills has funded two practice frameworks (Síolta and Aistear) to support the development of quality provision in participating services.

Síolta – developed in 2006 by the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education and operating under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills – is concerned with all areas of quality that impact on children's care and education. It includes early learning and development, but also other standards such as health and welfare, environments, planning and evaluation, and organisation. Aistear – developed in 2009 by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment – is a curriculum framework that focuses specifically on supporting children's early learning and development from birth to 6 years. The two frameworks of Síolta and Aistear complement each other and Aistear can help practitioners work towards a number of the standards in Síolta, such as curriculum, environments, identity and belonging, partnership with parents, interactions and play.

The generation of a workforce development plan for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) sector is a key element of the Government's commitment to quality early childhood care and education. As part of the process of developing this workforce development plan, an extensive programme of research and public consultation was undertaken in 2009. The following documents were published electronically in 2009 (available on www.omcya.ie):

- Developing the Workforce in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector: *Background Discussion Paper*;
- Developing the Workforce in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector: *Consultation Document*;
- Developing the Workforce in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector: *Report on Findings from the Consultative Process*.

Current provision within the primary school sector

While the compulsory school age in Ireland is 6, children from the age of 4 can be enrolled in junior infant classes in primary schools. The most recent statistics (2007-2008) from the Department of Education and Skills show a continuing pattern whereby nearly half of 4-year-olds and virtually all 5-year-olds are enrolled in infant classes in primary schools. For pre-school children, the Department's interventions in early years have been targeted towards children who experience disadvantage or who have special needs.



These social inclusion measures include:

- The **Early Start** pre-school project, which was established in 1994/95 in 40 primary schools in designated areas of urban disadvantage in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Galway, Drogheda and Dundalk. The project involves an educational programme to enhance overall development, help prevent school failure and offset the effects of social disadvantage. The total number of spaces provided by the existing 40 Early Start centres is 1,680.
- The **Rutland Street Project**, established in 1969, is a pre-school attached to the Rutland Street primary school in Dublin. Although not part of Early Start, it was used to pilot many of the approaches later incorporated in the Early Start project.
- **Traveller pre-schools:** There are 29 pre-schools catering for approximately 250 Traveller children. The policy set out in the 2006 Traveller Education Strategy is to move towards integrated provision for Traveller services, including Traveller pre-schools (Department of Education and Science, 2006).
- **Special Education needs:** The Department of Education and Skills funds a number of interventions, including 45 pre-school classes, to facilitate the demand for early intervention provision for children on the autistic spectrum. The Department also operates a home tuition scheme, providing funding for early educational intervention for 361 pre-school children with autism.

8. Building an effective youth justice service for children and young people

Irish Youth Justice Service

The Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) operates within the strategic environment of the OMCYA to ensure that youth justice issues are viewed in the wider context of children's services generally. The IYJS is an executive office of the Department of Justice and Law Reform with responsibility for leading and driving reform in the area of youth justice. Guided by the principles of the Children Act 2001, its mission is *'to create a safer society by working in partnership to reduce youth offending through appropriate interventions and linkages into services'*.

The IYJS funds organisations and projects providing services, including Garda and Probation projects, to young people under 18 who find themselves in conflict with the law. These children may be involved with An Garda Síochána, the Probation Service and the Courts. The IYJS is also responsible for the management and development of children detention facilities.

The remit of the IYJS is to improve the delivery of youth justice services and reduce youth offending. This challenge is met by focusing on preventing criminal behaviour, diversion and rehabilitation, involving greater use of community-based interventions and the promotion of initiatives to deal with young people who offend, and the use of detention only as a last resort. Providing a safe and secure environment for those children who are detained and supporting their early re-integration back into the community is also a key function.

National Youth Justice Strategy 2008 – 2010

The National Youth Justice Strategy 2008-2010 (IYJS, 2008) sets out plans for the delivery of coordinated programmes and services in the area of youth justice through a number of Government departments and agencies, including the Departments of Education and Skills, Health and Children, and Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs; the HSE; An Garda Síochána; the Courts Service; the Probation Service; and the Children Acts Advisory Board (CAAB).

The strategy is being progressed at national level by the National Youth Justice Oversight Group, chaired by the Director General of the OMCYA, which was established to facilitate the cross-agency collaboration needed. Goals and targets have been set for the various agencies involved to help measure progress and to assess where available resources should be targeted. Significant progress has been made under each of the high-level goals, the net effect of which is to create a more coordinated strategic approach, make better use of existing resources, create positive working relationships among stakeholders and deliver better outcomes for children in trouble with the law and for the community in general.

Communicating the message of the IYJS

Two editions of the *IYJS Newsletter* were published in 2009 and the website (www.iyjs.ie) was further developed. In 2010, the IYJS will hold its second Biennial Conference under the theme 'Young People and Crime – Where to Now?' and also host the 5 Nations Biennial Conference on Children, Young People and Crime.

Community sanctions

The IYJS, in cooperation with the Young Persons' Probation (YPP) division of the Probation Service, continued the roll-out in 2009 of the 10 community sanctions provided for under the Children Act 2001 (as amended). Two further options open to the Courts – a Probation Family Conference and a Parental Supervision Order – have also been made available nationwide.



Emphasis on diversion

There are currently 100 Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs) located around the country. To increase their effectiveness, the IYJS undertook a baseline analysis of the projects in 2008, reviewing their activities in the context of local youth crime patterns, the profile of young people who offend and the available evidence regarding best practice and improvements sought by the projects. The report of the baseline analysis, *Designing Effective Local Responses to Youth Crime*, was published in July 2009 (IYJS, 2009). It provides a qualitative profile of youth crime in each locality and sets out a strategy for GYDPs to impact effectively on youth offending. The recommendations of the report centre around greater alignment of projects to local youth crime patterns and improved training and best practice. All recommendations will be substantially implemented by the end of 2010.

The services provided by the GYDPs also continued to be enhanced during 2009 by the part ESF-funded GYDP Employability Programme, which improves the education and employability prospects of young people engaged in the projects. It does so by providing funding for the provision of IT and Personal Development courses and by providing support for participants in accessing further education and training through increasing the capacity of projects to work with participants, relevant agencies and employers.

Children Detention Schools

The IYJS has responsibility for overseeing the management of the 4 children detention schools: Oberstown Boys and Girls and Trinity House Schools, which are on the same site near Lusk, Co. Dublin; and Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre.

In March 2008, the Government approved the development of new national detention facilities to cater for all children aged up to 18 years who are ordered to be detained by the Courts. These facilities are to be located on the Oberstown site and will increase the accommodation capacity in the system from 77 to 167 places. Planning for the future development continued throughout 2009. The Office of Public Works, appointed to deliver the design and manage the procurement of the construction phase of the project, has developed sketch designs and an order of magnitude cost, which have been approved by the Steering Committee overseeing progress on the project at a strategic level.

Some refurbishment and essential maintenance of existing facilities was undertaken in 2009 to ensure the continued availability of safe and secure detention places to the Courts until such time as the new facilities are developed and, where practicable, to improve conditions for staff and children.

In the light of the decision to develop the new national children detention facilities in 2008, the Government approved the establishment of a Working Group to consider the possible future role of Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre, the only detention school not located on the Oberstown site. The Group reported in 2009 and recommended the closure of the Fingal Centre and the transfer of the children and services to Oberstown.

A strategy for integrating the services of the present 4 children detention schools has been drafted by the IYJS in consultation with the directors and senior managers of the schools. A change management forum has been established to coordinate and drive the integration process. Preparing for integration, the directors of the detention schools, together with Mr. Tony O'Donovan, Child Welfare Advisor of the IYJS, have agreed to take on additional cross-campus responsibilities, involving the restructuring of the existing functions of the 4 schools and placing them into an organisational structure more suitable for an integrated detention school model.

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Appendix 1: Members of the Children and Young People’s Participation Partnership Committee

Name	Organisation
Ms. Anne O’Donnell, <i>Chairperson</i>	Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA)
Ms. Caroline Hurley, <i>Secretary</i>	OMCYA
Mr. Joe Allen	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Mr. Brian Brogan	Department of Education and Skills
Mr. John Cahill	Foróige
Mr. Ciaran Conroy	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Mr. Tom Costello	Irish Vocational Education Association
Ms. Mary Cunningham	National Youth Council of Ireland
Mr. Kieran Donohoe	Ferns Diocesan Youth Service
Ms. Dara Dunne-Lambe	Leitrim Comhairle na nÓg
Ms. Marie Fitzpatrick	Pavee Point
Ms. Jennifer Gargan	Irish Association of Young People in Care
Mr. Paul Gralton	Youth Work Ireland
Ms. Lisa Grant	Waterford City Council
Ms. Rebecca Hennessy	Offaly Comhairle na nÓg
Mr. Adam Henson	Cork County Comhairle na nÓg
Ms. Mary Mallon	Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown County Council
Mr. Seamus Mannion	Health Service Executive, Western Area
Ms. Kathleen Martin	Roscommon County Council
Ms. Olivia McEvoy	Comhairle na nÓg Evaluator
Ms. Olive McGovern	OMCYA
Mr. Garry McMahan	Galway City Council
Mr. Jim O’Donovan	OMCYA
Mr. Niall O’Halloran	Clare Comhairle na nÓg
Mr. Conor O’Malley	Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Ms. Deirdre Phelan	Curriculum Development Unit
Mr. Sean Redmond	Irish Youth Justice Service
Ms. Mary Robb	City of Dublin Youth Services Board
Mr. Don Sexton	Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs
Mr. David Treacy	Irish Vocational Education Asssocation

Appendix 2: Members of the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG)

Name	Organisation
Ms. Sylva Langford, <i>Chairperson</i>	Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA)
Mr. Pat Bennett	Family Support Agency
Mr. Aidan Browne	Children Acts Advisory Board
Ms. Elizabeth Canavan	OMCYA
Mr. Adrian Charles ¹	Health Service Executive (HSE)
Ms. Aoife Davey	National Drugs Strategy Team
Ms. Nuala Doherty	National Educational Welfare Board
Mr. Michael Donnellan	Probation and Welfare Service
Mr. Des Dowling	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Mr. Pat Dowling	Limerick City Council
Ms. Marie Dullea	OMCYA
Ms. Helen Faughnan	Department of Social Protection
Mr. Pat Fitzgerald	HSE
Mr. Phil Garland ²	HSE
Dr. Deborah Ghate	Centre for Effective Services
Dr. Aisling Gillen	HSE
Supt. Louis Harkin	An Garda Síochána
Mr. John Hayes	HSE
Mr. Joe Horan	South Dublin County Council
Mr. Liam Hughes	Department of Education and Skills
Mr. Brendan Kenny	Limerick Regeneration Agencies
Mr. Denis Leamy	Pobal
Mr. Michael McLoone	Donegal County Council
Mr. Ciaran McNamara	Dublin City Council
Ms. Bairbre Nic Aongusa	Department of Health and Children
Ms. Anne O'Donnell	OMCYA
Mr. Gerry O'Neill	HSE
Mr. Denis O'Sullivan ³	OMCYA
Mr. Tim Scully	Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Ms. Michelle Shannon	Irish Youth Justice Service
Ms. Kathleen Stack	Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs
Mr. John Treacy	Irish Sports Council

¹ Replaced Mr. Hugh Kane

² Replaced Mr. Seamus Mannion

³ Replaced Mr. Charlie Hardy

Appendix 3: Members of the National Youth Work Advisory Committee (NYWAC)

Name	Organisation
Mr. Pat Forde, <i>Chairperson</i>	Ministerial nominee
Mr. Jim McVeigh	Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA)
Mr. David Treacy	IVEA
Mr. Clifford Kelly	IVEA
Mr. Seán Ó Longáin	IVEA
Mr. Michael Barron	National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)
Mr. Seán Campbell	NYCI
Ms. Mary Cunningham	NYCI
Mr. Eddie D'Arcy	NYCI
Dr. Maurice Devlin	NYCI
Mr. Gef Dickson	NYCI
Mr. Diarmuid Kearney	NYCI
Mr. Eamonn Lynch	NYCI
Ms. Orlaith McBride	NYCI
Ms. Elaine Nevin	NYCI
Ms. Aoife Nic Lughadha	NYCI
Ms. Joan Nicholl	NYCI
Mr. Declan O'Leary	NYCI
Mr. James O'Leary	NYCI
Mr. Deinol Jones	NYCI (alternate)
Ms. Jillian Van Turnhout	NYCI
Ms. Mary Rose Desmond	Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation
Ms. Carol McGann	Minister for Social Protection
Mr. Ruairi Gogan	Minister for Justice and Law Reform
Ms. Olive McGovern	Minister for Health and Children
Mr. Brendan Buggy	Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Mr. Michael Kennedy	Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport
<i>Vacancy</i>	Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs
Ms. Fionnuala Anderson	FÁS
<i>Vacancy</i>	Department of Education and Skills (Inspectorate)
Ms. Audrey Hagerty ¹	Department of Health and Children (Youth Affairs)
Mr. Malcolm Byrne	Ministerial nominee
Ms. Aideen Logan ²	Ministerial nominee

¹ Replaced by Ms. Elizabeth Canavan in November 2009

² Ms. Aideen Logan passed away during 2009

Appendix 4: Members of the National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee (NCCC)

Name	Organisation
Ms. Sylva Langford, <i>Chairperson</i>	Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA)
Mr. Aidan Madden, <i>Secretary</i>	OMCYA
Ms. Elizabeth Bowen	Chambers Ireland
Ms. Aisling Byrne	FÁS
Cllr. Anne Carter	Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly
Ms. Veronica Cawley	Border Midland Western Regional Assembly
Ms. Dorothy Clarke	Sligo County Council
Ms. Anne Conroy	Barnardos
Ms. Treacy Costello	St. Nicholas Montessori Teachers' Association
Mr. David Burke	Pobal
Mr. Brian Dignam	Health Service Executive, East Coast Area
Mr. Declan Dunne	Planet
Ms. Siobhan Fitzpatrick	High Scope Ireland
Ms. Cliona Frost	Forbairt Naíonraí Teo
Ms. Irene Gunning	Irish Pre-Schools Playgroups Association
Ms. Nóirín Hayes	Dublin Institute of Technology
Ms. Teresa Heeney	National Children's Nurseries Association
Mr. Jim Hewison	Southern and Eastern County Childcare Committee
Ms. Catherine Hynes	Department of Education and Skills
Ms. Mary Keane	Action South Kildare Ltd.
Ms. Sharon Boles	Border Midland Western County Childcare Committee
Ms. Colette Murray	Community Pillar
Ms. Patricia Murray	Childminding Ireland
Ms. Orla O'Connor	National Women's Council of Ireland
Ms. Moira O'Mara	OMCYA
Mr. Pearse O'Shiel	Irish Steiner Waldorf Early Education Association
Ms. Vivienne Rattigan	Irish Congress of Trades Unions
Ms. Fiona McDonnell	Health Service Executive
Ms. Mary Sherry	Irish Farmers Association



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