









An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthai Óige  
Department of  
Children and Youth Affairs



# NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY 2015–2020



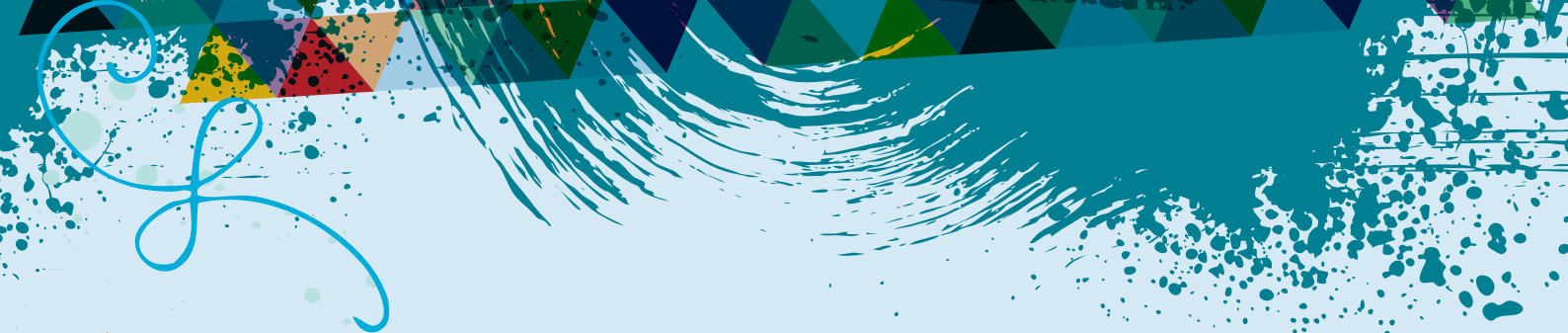


The aim of the National Youth Strategy is to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential, by respecting their rights and hearing their voices, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.



# NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY 2015–2020





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Cover image: Young people from Monaghan Youth Theatre.  
Credit: Marc O’Sullivan, courtesy of NYCI Youth Arts Programme.





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## PRINCIPLES

The following principles are central to the National Youth Strategy and its implementation:

### Young people and those who support them:

1. Young people are valued in their own right, and recognised as integral to society.
2. Young people are acknowledged as key drivers in achieving their cognitive, emotional, social, economic and cultural development.
3. Parents, families, other significant adults and communities are recognised as playing a critical role in the development and progression of young people.

### Professionals and volunteers working with young people:

4. Professionals and volunteers who work with young people are respected, valued and appropriately supported in their work.
5. Those providing services for young people act in the best interests of young people, and respect and uphold young people's rights.

### Policies and practices:

6. An equality perspective is integrated into all policy and practice.

### Service development and delivery:

7. Government and other stakeholders work collaboratively, with vertical and horizontal communication and cooperation, to achieve more effective services and supports for young people.
8. Services for young people are open, accessible, resourced and provide additional support in response to particular needs.
9. Services for young people are quality assured, outcomes focused and informed by evidence.



# MINISTER'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to publish Ireland's first *National Youth Strategy 2015–2020*. Over 800,000 young people in Ireland are aged 10–24 years, representing 18.3% of the country's total population. This period in a young person's life is acknowledged as one of the critical transitions in the lifespan, and as a period characterised by tremendous growth and changes that is second only to that of infancy. It is therefore imperative that we work to ensure that all young people reach their potential, their rights are respected and their voices are heard, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

Improving outcomes for young people is everyone's business. The National Youth Strategy has its basis in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014–2020* and complements the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making 2015–2020*. The National Youth Strategy takes a cross-sectoral, whole-of-society approach to supporting young people in their everyday lives.

The Strategy sets out Government's aim and objectives for young people, aged 10 to 24 years, so that they are active and healthy, achieving their full potential in learning and development, safe and protected from harm, have economic security and opportunity, and are connected and contributing to their world. It is a universal strategy for all young people and provides for the needs of young people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, the poorest outcomes. It recognises that the key supportive factors in young people's lives are parents, family, friends, other adults such as youth workers and teachers, and the community.

The Strategy has been developed in a collaborative manner, engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including Government departments, State agencies, NGOs and of course, the real experts, young people themselves. Over 2013 and 2014, the National Youth Work Advisory Committee carried out important preparatory work for the Strategy. Subsequently, a National Youth Strategy Task Group was convened by my Department to guide and inform its development. This Task Group's work was supported by an Advisory Group convened by the National Youth Council of Ireland and comprising some 18 voluntary youth organisations.

A comprehensive consultation process involving over 4,600 people, of whom almost 4,000 were young people under the age of 25 also informed the Strategy and its priority actions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed for their input, energy and time and for their commitment – this is evidence of the importance that we all attach to improving outcomes for our young people. This development process has helped to ensure that the Strategy is relevant and responsive to the situations, needs, and aspirations of our young people. It has also helped to build collective and shared ownership of the Strategy and for its implementation at national and local levels.

The challenge now is for all stakeholders, both professionals and volunteers, to work together to make this Strategy a reality for young people. My Department will provide leadership at national level to ensure that national policy is connected to local implementation. It will support stakeholders in making best use of the implementation structures established for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. I, and my Department, are committed to leading the implementation of a number of enabling actions across the five national outcome areas for children and young people by working to ensure quality services, focusing on prevention and early intervention, improving collaboration and coordination, and improving access to quality information and supports.

Young people matter. They are very important to us now and to our future. By working together, I am confident that we can support our young people as they grow and develop. It is imperative that we give every young person the best possible start in adult life.

**Dr. James Reilly, TD**

*Minister for Children and Youth Affairs*





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the National Youth Strategy has been overseen by a cross-sectoral National Youth Strategy Task Group convened by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (see *Appendix 1*). Preparatory work for the Strategy was undertaken by the National Youth Work Advisory Committee over the period 2013–2014. The Task Group provided input and feedback in relation to aim, principles, and priorities. The Strategy has been prepared by the National Youth Strategy Project Team convened under the leadership of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

## PROJECT TEAM

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The Strategy has also been informed by an Advisory Group convened by the National Youth Council of Ireland, comprising representatives of the voluntary youth sector.

The Strategy reflects the results of extensive consultations with young people, youth practitioners and service providers and other stakeholders.





Image: Young people from Wexford Youth Theatre, Kerry Youth Dance, CDS Pictures, Dublin, Errigal Groove Orchestra, Donegal, and Young Irish Filmmakers, Kilkenny at the NYCI National Youth Arts Showcase in the National Library of Ireland.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Youth Strategy 2015–2020 has its basis in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People (2014–2020)*.<sup>1</sup> This framework sets out the Government's agenda and priorities in relation to all children and young people under the age of 25 years and provides for the development and implementation of policies and services in relation to the following interconnected and mutually reinforcing outcome areas.

1. Active and healthy, physical and mental well-being
2. Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Safe and protected from harm
4. Economic security and opportunity
5. Connected, respected and contributing to their world.

One-third of Ireland's population is under the age of 25 years, with young people aged between 10 and 24 years representing 18.3% of the total population of 4.59 million.<sup>2</sup> The National Youth Strategy focuses on this age cohort. Many of these young people are happy in their home and with their families, enjoy friendships, are actively engaged in sport, culture and recreation, progress at school and in higher education, have good health and self-esteem, and are civically engaged. At the same time, some are experiencing adversity due to a range of socio-economic and other factors, and need additional support on the journey to autonomy and independence. Some of the positives and negatives in the lives of Irish young people can be seen in the following key facts and figures:

- Participation in sport or physical exercise is high (71%). However, only 12% of post-primary school children engage in recommended levels of physical activity; 6% of 13-year-olds are obese, and a further 20% are overweight.<sup>3</sup>
- Just over 90% of young people completed second-level education in 2014, with half progressing into third-level education, and a fifth into vocational training.
- In 2010, 90% of young people aged 10–17 years reported feeling safe in their communities. By contrast, 12,246 young people were referred to the Garda Youth Diversion Programme in 2012.

- In 2014, 23.9% of young people aged 15-24 years were unemployed. The trend is down, from almost 80,000 on average in 2009 to 47,000 on average in 2014.
- In 2013, 14% of young people aged 15-24 years were living in consistent poverty.
- In 2012, over one-third of young people reported being involved in some form of political activity and 39% reported being involved in a club or society.

In responding to the diverse needs and aspirations of these young people, and in line with the vision for a better Ireland set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, the National Youth Strategy focuses on enhancing the contribution of current and emerging policies, programmes and services to improving the national outcomes for young people aged 10-24 years. The Strategy is evidence informed and outcomes focused; is based on an understanding of youth as a distinctive period of development between childhood and adulthood, and takes account of the social and economic factors that influence young people during this period and the important role that parents, families, friends, other adults and communities play in young people's lives. It is informed by national and European policy developments, as well as by the results of a national consultation with young people, those who work with them, and other stakeholders.

The National Youth Strategy recognises the importance of strong engagement by, and collaboration between, statutory bodies/agencies and non-governmental organisations in the pursuit of better outcomes for young people. It acknowledges the interconnection between all of these areas of work, and that young people benefit most when the work of all stakeholders is mutually reinforcing.

The aim of the National Youth Strategy is to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential, by respecting their rights and hearing their voices, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.



To achieve this aim, a number of **objectives** have been set in relation to each of the five national outcome areas.

### OUTCOME 1: ACTIVE AND HEALTHY. PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

- Objective 1** Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle, in particular with regard to their physical, mental and sexual health and well-being.
- Objective 2** Young people benefit from involvement in recreational and cultural opportunities including youth work, arts, and sports.

### OUTCOME 2: ACHIEVING FULL POTENTIAL IN ALL AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Objective 3** Young people's core skills, competencies and attributes are enhanced and promoted through accessible, responsive, formal and non-formal education and learning opportunities.
- Objective 4** Young people benefit from strengthened transition supports at all levels as they move through the education system.

### OUTCOME 3: SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM HARM

- Objective 5** Young people, and in particular vulnerable and marginalised young people, are supported to feel safe at home, in school, in their communities and online, and are empowered to speak out when feeling unsafe or vulnerable.
- Objective 6** Young people have safe places and spaces where they can socialise and develop.

### OUTCOME 4: ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY

- Objective 7** Young people are better able to participate in the labour market through enhanced employability skills that complement formal learning and training qualifications and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Objective 8** Young people are a particular focus in policies that address social inclusion and poverty.

### OUTCOME 5: CONNECTED, RESPECTED AND CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR WORLD

- Objective 9** Young people are included in society, are environmentally aware, their equality and rights are upheld, their diversity celebrated, and they are empowered to be active global citizens.
- Objective 10** Young people's autonomy is supported, their active citizenship fostered, and their voice strengthened through political, social and civic engagement.

The Strategy shows how Government, State agencies and other stakeholders are already working to achieve these objectives. Having regard to priorities identified and further developed under *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, the National Youth Strategy identifies more than 50 **priority actions** over the period 2015–2017. These include:

- Promoting quality-assured, online youth mental health services among young people and within youth work and education settings
- Developing a *National Obesity Policy and Action Plan* which will focus on prevention, treatment and research, and will include consultation to ensure that the views of young people are heard
- Developing a national system for recognition of non-formal and informal learning in line with the *EU Council Recommendation 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning*
- Promoting innovative projects and initiatives which support young people at critical transition points in their lives
- Educating young people about staying safe online, and exploring the provision of online safety training for parents and those working with young people through joined-up efforts and programmes in formal and non-formal education settings
- Supporting compliance with the current *Child Protection Guidance* and the *Children First Act* (forthcoming), including embedding mandatory reporting in work practices and publishing Child Safeguarding Statements by providers of relevant services, as required under the legislation
- Promoting and developing opportunities for those young people furthest from the labour market through measures such as the Youth Employability Initiative, which can be delivered by youth services
- Promoting and supporting youth entrepreneurship initiatives in schools and youth work settings
- Rolling out the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making* (2015)
- Promoting developmental and volunteering opportunities for young people across the EU and internationally through programmes such as the Erasmus+ Programme, Youth on the Move Initiative, and the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme.

Achieving the aim of the National Youth Strategy, and delivering on the objectives set out in the Strategy, depends on the services and supports provided by Government, statutory and non-statutory agencies, and other stakeholders. While the services provided by stakeholders have a particular focus, the National Youth Strategy recognises and seeks to strengthen the interacting and mutually reinforcing nature of their work, by improving collaboration, coordination and coherence across all policy areas, sectors and services, and informing stakeholders about planning in relation to services and programmes for young people.

## Enabling and supporting implementation

The implementation structures established by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* provide an extensive supporting and enabling structure for the National Youth Strategy (see Appendix 2: *Implementation structures for Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*). To maximise this support, DCYA will provide leadership at national level, in order to ensure that national policy dovetails with local implementation and with the implementation structures under *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. The aim is to optimise stakeholders' collective contribution and support them in working together to achieve better outcomes for young people. This approach to implementation involves enabling actions across the five national outcome areas for children and young people led by DCYA (see Table 3). The aim is to ensure quality services, focus on prevention and early intervention, improve collaboration and coordination, and improve access to quality information and supports. Enabling actions include:

- Enhancing effective prevention and early intervention through the reformed targeted youth programme as recommended in the *Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes (2014)*, while ensuring a preventive focus in and across all other universal programmes and schemes within DCYA which focus on the development of young people
- Developing efficient and user-friendly ways of collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data at local, regional and national level to inform service planning, delivery, assessment and continuous improvement.

To support implementation, DCYA will establish a **National Youth Strategy Lead Team**, drawing from experience in DCYA and technical assistance from relevant experts, as required. This team will, inter alia, communicate the Strategy and its Implementation Framework to stakeholders, be the central point of contact within DCYA for the Strategy, and support the coordination, progression and monitoring of its implementation.

## Measuring progress

Implementation of the priorities in the National Youth Strategy will be assessed by tracking progress over time. Key indicators relevant to the youth cohort being developed in the context of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, will be utilised to track progress in young people's lives over the lifespan of the Strategy.

Progress on implementation of the National Youth Strategy will be included in the annual report for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*.

## Review

In the context of the mid-term review of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, the National Youth Strategy will be appraised in 2017 by DCYA to assess progress, examine the process and review the continuing relevance of its objectives and priorities. A route for further progression will then be charted.



# 1

# INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

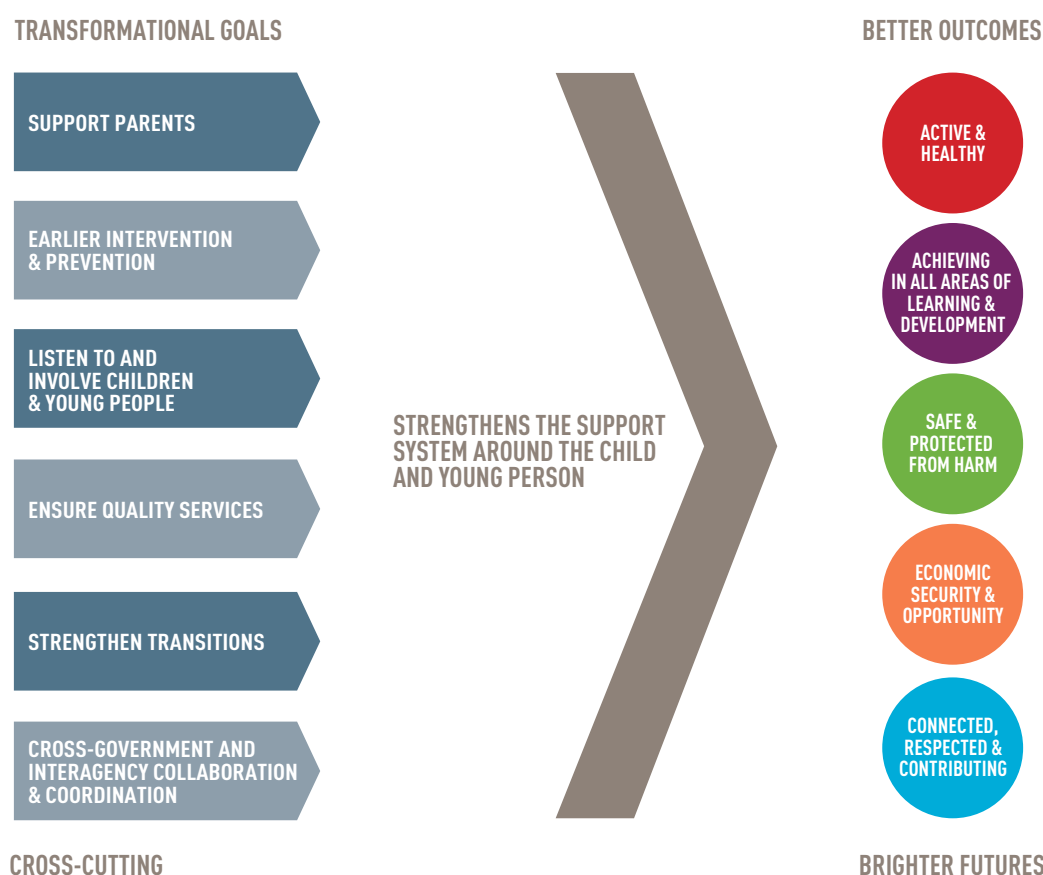
## THE BASIS AND PURPOSE OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

The National Youth Strategy has its basis in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014-2020*,<sup>4</sup> which is **Ireland's first National Policy Framework** for children and young people aged 0-24 years. The vision for this whole-of-Government policy framework is for:

Ireland to be one of the best small countries  
in which to grow up and raise a family, and  
where the rights of all children and young  
people are respected, protected and fulfilled;  
where their voices are heard and where  
they are supported to realise their  
maximum potential.

As shown in Figure 1, *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* captures all children and youth policy commitments across Government departments and agencies in relation to five outcome areas and six key transformational goals. The National Youth Strategy focuses on youth policy commitments. It is one of three strategies developed under *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). The other two are the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making* (2015) and the *National Early Years Strategy* (forthcoming).

FIGURE 1: SIX TRANSFORMATIONAL GOALS FOR ACHIEVING THE FIVE NATIONAL OUTCOMES



Implementation of the commitments outlined in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* is being coordinated by an Implementation Team led by DCYA, and supported by implementation structures involving key stakeholders. These structures, which comprise the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium, an Advisory Council and a Sponsors Group, consolidate many of the existing consultative bodies and interdepartmental processes within DCYA. Allied to this is a greater alignment of existing groupings, including a newly reconstituted National Steering Group for Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs), Comhairle na nÓg, and Ireland's EU Structured Dialogue process (see *Glossary of key terms for details*). These structures and groupings will provide a crucial source of support for the National Youth Strategy (see *section 5 for further details*).

The aim of the National Youth Strategy is to enable all young people aged 10-24 years to realise their maximum potential with regard to the five national outcomes outlined in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. While it is a universal strategy for all young people, it provides for the needs of young people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, the poorest outcomes.

# 2 UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN IRELAND

## THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

One-third of Ireland's population is under the age of 25 years, with 10-24 year-olds representing 18.3% of the total population of 4.59 million.<sup>5</sup> In relation to the five national outcome areas, many young people are happy in their home and with their families, enjoy friendships, are actively engaged in sport, culture and recreation, progress at school and in higher education, have good health and self-esteem, and many are civically engaged. At the same time, some are experiencing adversity due to a range of socio-economic factors.

### Being active and healthy

According to the Department of Health, in 2013 the overwhelming majority of Irish young people were positive about their health, with fewer than 3% of males and 6% of females perceiving their health as being 'fair, bad or very bad'.<sup>6</sup> Over 70% of young people play sport or exercise once a week.<sup>7</sup> However, only 12% of post-primary school children engage in recommended levels of physical activity, with girls less likely than boys to meet the physical activity recommendations outlined in *The Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study* (CSPPA, 2010).<sup>8</sup> Obesity continues to be an issue, with 6% of 13-year-olds reported as obese in 2012, and a further 20% reported as overweight.<sup>9,10</sup> In 2011, around 44,000 young people aged 15-24 years reported having a disability.<sup>11</sup> It has also been estimated that 20% of 16-year-olds are weekly drinkers.<sup>12</sup>

Although most young people are doing well, in 2013 the suicide rate for young people in Ireland aged 15-19 years was the fourth highest in the EU.<sup>13</sup> The majority of young people who die by suicide have not had any contact with a mental health professional.<sup>14</sup> Young people, especially young girls, are particularly vulnerable to negative self-image and media pressure surrounding body image.<sup>15</sup>

### Achieving in learning and developing

The number of young people in Ireland completing second-level education is among the highest in the EU. In 2014, just over 90% of students stayed in school to complete their Leaving Certificate.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the proportion of early school-leavers in Ireland (9.7%) is well below the EU average of 14%.<sup>17</sup> A high level of absenteeism is a factor for those young people at risk of leaving school early, and is associated with

poor educational achievement.<sup>18</sup> In 2014, it was reported that about 74,000 15-24 year-olds in Ireland (16.7%) were not in education, employment or training compared with the OECD average of 12.6%.<sup>19</sup> Over 50% of young people who are unemployed have no more than lower secondary education.<sup>20</sup>

### Being safe and protected from harm

In 2010, the majority (90%) of young people aged 10-17 years reported feeling safe in their communities.<sup>21</sup> However, almost one-quarter of 9-16 year-olds (23%) surveyed in Ireland in 2012 experienced some form of bullying, online or offline (the latter being the most frequent). Research indicates a high level of homophobic bullying in schools and other settings, and this, together with family rejection, has been identified as leading to poor mental health outcomes in later life for young LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people.<sup>22</sup> Over 12,000 young people were referred to the Garda Youth Diversion Programme in 2012,<sup>23</sup> with a small number in this group being responsible for disproportionate levels of alcohol-related youth crime in project catchment areas. Of the 6,470 children in care at the end of 2013, 3,721 were 10-17 year-olds.<sup>24</sup>

### Enjoying economic opportunity and security

In 2014, the under 25 years age group had an unemployment rate of 23.9% (32.5% for 15-19 year-olds and 21.6% for 20-24 year-olds), which was down from 30.4% in 2012. About 38% of the young unemployed, however, were out of work for more than one year.<sup>25</sup>

It was reported in 2014 that approximately 40% of young people (aged 18-29 years) were living with their parents.<sup>26</sup> In 2012, individuals living in households where there was one adult and one or more children under 18 years continued to have the highest consistent poverty rate at 17.4%.<sup>27</sup> In general, young people are at greater risk of suffering deprivation than other social groups, with 14% of young people aged 15-24 years living in consistent poverty in 2013,<sup>28</sup> and there are particular issues for the 38% of 10-24 year-olds who live in rural areas.<sup>29</sup>

### Being connected, respected and contributing

Young people in Ireland today are more active socially and are more engaged in volunteering activities compared with their EU counterparts, with almost 40% involved in a club or society.<sup>30</sup> More than one-third of young people in Ireland are involved in some form of political activity.<sup>31</sup> An estimated 43% of young people aged between 10 and 24 years are engaged in various youth work activities and programmes provided by voluntary youth organisations.<sup>32</sup> In 2013, about 35% of those emigrating from Ireland were aged between 15 and 24 years, with young people in their twenties constituting over 70% of those emigrating from Ireland.<sup>33</sup>

For those young people in Ireland who self-identify as LGBT, the most common age is 12 years, while the most common age at which they begin the process of 'coming out' to others is 17 years. This can often be a time of profound isolation for LGBT young people.<sup>34</sup>

Table 1 presents a snapshot of the social and economic situation of young people aged between 10 and 24 years in Ireland today.



**TABLE 1: SNAPSHOT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN IRELAND**

OUTCOME 1: ACTIVE AND HEALTHY, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer than 3% of males and 6% of females aged 16-24 years perceive their health as being “fair, bad or very bad”.<sup>35</sup></li> <li>• Participation in sport or physical exercise is high in Ireland at 71%.<sup>36, 37</sup> However, only 12% of post-primary school children engage in recommended levels of physical activity.</li> <li>• The cost of healthcare in Ireland is the fourth highest in the EU, and is seen as a barrier for 51% of young people.<sup>38</sup></li> <li>• 6% of 13-year-olds are obese and a further 20% are overweight.<sup>39</sup></li> <li>• 20% of 16-year-olds are weekly drinkers.<sup>40</sup></li> </ul>
OUTCOME 2: ACHIEVING FULL POTENTIAL IN ALL AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just over 90% of young people complete second-level education.<sup>41</sup></li> <li>• Around 50% progress into third-level education, and one-fifth progress into vocational training.<sup>42</sup></li> <li>• The proportion of early school-leavers is 9.7% in Ireland, well below the European Union average of 14%.<sup>43</sup></li> <li>• 22,424 young people in second-level schools were taught all subjects through the medium of Irish.</li> </ul>
OUTCOME 3: SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM HARM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of young people aged 10-17 years report feeling safe in their communities, although there is regional variation, with the figure dropping to 84.9% in Dublin.<sup>44</sup></li> <li>• Of the 6,470 children in care at the end of 2013, 3,721 (58%) were aged between 10 and 17 years (inclusive).<sup>45</sup></li> <li>• 12,246 young people were referred to the Garda Youth Diversion Programme in 2012.<sup>46</sup></li> </ul>
OUTCOME 4: ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2014, 23.9% of young people aged 15-24 years were unemployed. The trend is down, from almost 80,000 on average in 2009 to 47,000 on average in 2014.<sup>47</sup></li> <li>• The unemployment rate for those aged 20-24 years with no more than lower secondary education has been over 50%, compared with about 30% for those with higher secondary education and 20% for third-level graduates.<sup>48</sup></li> <li>• In 2013, 14% of young people aged 15-24 years were living in consistent poverty.<sup>49</sup></li> </ul>

*continued*

## OUTCOME 5: CONNECTED, RESPECTED AND CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR WORLD

- Over one-third of young people report being involved in some form of political activity.<sup>50</sup>
- 39% of young people are involved in a club or society.<sup>51</sup>
- 12% of those under the age of 24 years were born in a country other than Ireland.<sup>52</sup>
- Approximately 38% of 10-24 year-olds live in rural Ireland.<sup>53</sup>

## YOUTH AS A PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT

The World Health Organization identifies 'youth' as a critical developmental stage in the lifespan and as a period characterised by tremendous growth and changes that is second only to that of infancy.<sup>54</sup> While age is a convenient way to define this period in the lifecycle, it is only one characteristic and relates more to fundamental biological changes than to developments that are more contingent on social, economic, cultural, religious, and other contextual factors.

While many of the changes in young people's lives happen during 'adolescence' (defined by the World Health Organization as ages 10-19 years),<sup>55</sup> this period is extending upwards due to societal and economic changes such as the later age of marriage, and extended dependence on parents. In turn, these changes impact on how young people are viewed, and there is increasing acknowledgement in many societies that supports traditionally designed for adolescents need to extend to the 19-24 years age group.

Although young people are diverse and do not develop in precisely the same way and at the same rate, profound changes commonly occur during this period. The most obvious physical changes include increases in height, development of muscle mass and the development of secondary sexual characteristics. Recent neurological studies also show that during this period the brain still has considerable ability and capacity to develop.<sup>56</sup> This latter period is important because it means that it is possible to build on and reinforce early years' interventions or to remedy previous difficulties.

As biological maturity tends to precede psychosocial maturity, there may be a disconnection between physical capabilities, sensation seeking and impulse control. This may lead to risk-taking behaviours that have short-term and sometimes longer term consequences, for example in relation to health problems. Linked to this is an increasing desire for autonomy, independence and responsibility, which can be accompanied by the need to detach from parental authority and control.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, there is a growing concern among young people about what others, and particularly peers, think of them. For some, this increases their vulnerability in decision-making and their behaviours that

can have long-lasting impacts on their future development.<sup>58</sup> The majority of young people explore and experiment, however, in ways that contribute to their development rather than undermine their health and well-being.

### Critical transition points

Coming to a sense of personal, cultural and sexual identity is a critical task during this developmental period,<sup>59, 60, 61</sup> and is mediated by key stages in the move from child policy and systems to adult systems such as health, education, work, justice and social protection.<sup>62</sup> Broadly, these stages can be elaborated as follows:

- 10-15 years: achieving in school, while moving from primary to second-level education
- 16-17 years: moving from second-level education into work or higher/further education
- 18-24 years: continuing in work and education, voting, and moving from living with family or in other supportive contexts to independent living

### Supportive factors in young people's lives

Societal norms, responsibilities, expectations and values are all highly influential, and their impact can be seen in various areas, including family, friendships, school, and community life.<sup>63</sup> Children and young people are dependent on adults to secure their needs and welfare, and those with the benefit of positive parenting, a stable environment, a stable family life, strong family and kin relationships, community involvement and supportive networks are more likely to develop a strong sense of identity, self-worth, trust in others, the ability to handle stress and to develop and maintain relationships, and achieve good outcomes.<sup>64, 65</sup>

While parents/guardians are the primary carers, adults such as teachers, youth workers or social workers also provide the constructive interactions that can have a positive effect on young people's future intergenerational relationships and their social capital.<sup>66</sup> As they get older, young people are more inclined to seek guidance, advice and support from friends and peers.<sup>67</sup> These relationships are essential in enabling young people to explore their identities; to feel accepted and have a sense of belonging, and to practise and adopt necessary social skills.<sup>68</sup>

A positive experience of school is also a supportive factor in young people's lives, and can be particularly important for marginalised young people. It enhances health and well-being by acting as a protective factor against bullying, sexual risk taking and tobacco, alcohol and drug use.<sup>69</sup> In addition to school, a positive community context can enable civic and democratic engagement,<sup>70</sup> and play a part in breaking the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage by acting as a protective factor against substance misuse, criminality, social exclusion and deprivation.<sup>71</sup>

Active involvement in arts, sports and cultural activities is important in supporting the transition from childhood to adulthood, as it enables young people to discover

their own voice and place in the world. As well as providing enjoyment and contributing to well-being, this kind of engagement enables young people to develop social, physical and technical skills that will benefit them throughout life, and allow them to reach their potential in terms of learning and development. In turn, engagement enriches society and provides an important means through which young people can be connected, respected and contributing to their world.

Young people's participation in youth work activities can also be important for personal and social development. This includes developing core social skills and emotional competencies such as self-motivation, communication skills, collaborative working, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Involvement in youth work can enhance young people's connection with and contribution to their community, and enable them to be confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners, and responsible and active members of society.<sup>72</sup>

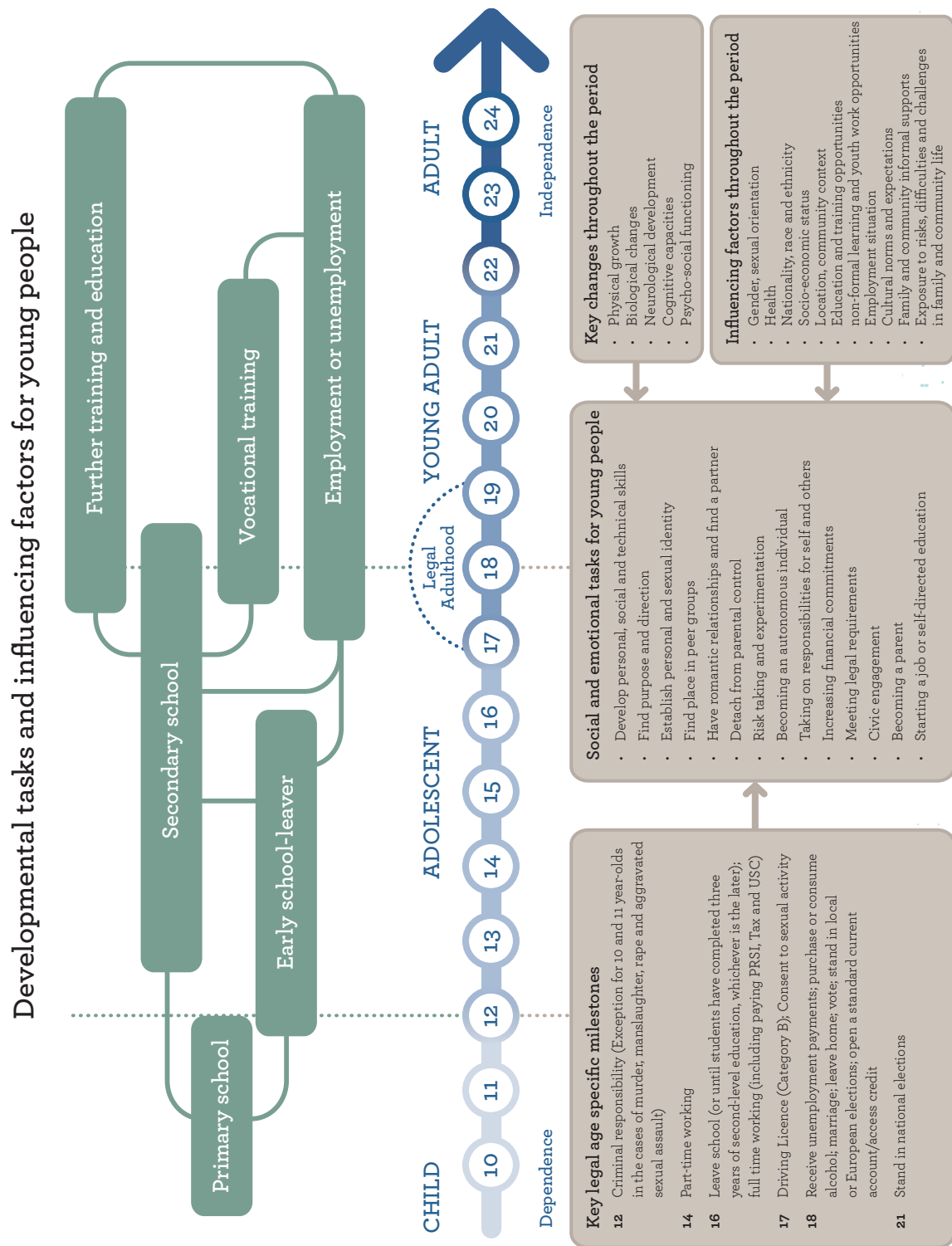
As they move through this development period, many young people are actively supported by family, friends and other adults, who help them to develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging that is essential for their own well-being and their participation in society.

For some young people, becoming autonomous and independent is more difficult. These include young people with mental health problems or living with disabilities or chronic illnesses; those who are stigmatised and marginalised due to their sexual orientation or ethnicity; young people who are exposed to substance abuse or various types of neglect and abuse, including practices such as female genital mutilation; those who are exploited, and young people in care who are moving to independent living.

Figure 2 provides an overview of youth as a developmental period, in terms of its key tasks, characteristic changes, and influencing factors.



FIGURE 2: OVERVIEW OF YOUTH AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD



## THE YOUTH POLICY ENVIRONMENT

To date, there has been no cross-sectoral policy framework specifically for youth in Ireland, although there has been an abundance of legislative and other initiatives. Many of these responded to shifting socio-economic conditions, to particular policy imperatives, or to sector-specific requirements. Figure 3 provides a chronological summary of just some of the many Acts, plans, guidelines, frameworks, standards, reviews, reports and strategies that impact on young people and have informed the development of the National Youth Strategy. It is also important to note that under the mainstreaming provisions of the 2005 Disability Act there is an onus on all Government departments and public bodies that provide services and information to the public to provide the same services to all citizens, including young people and adults with a disability.<sup>73</sup>

National youth policy is also informed by EU policy. As many of the challenges and issues facing young people in Ireland are shared across the EU and wider Europe, European youth policy can inform and give direction to policy development at national level. It also enhances opportunities for shared learning, accessing and contributing to research, and ensuring young people's participation in the shaping of the EU. A recent case in point has been the Irish EU Presidency in 2013, which led on EU youth policy development to address youth employment issues and quality standards for youth work.

The *EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering: a renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities*,<sup>74</sup> published by the European Commission, acknowledges that young people are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, especially in the economic and financial crisis, while at the same time they are a precious resource. It focuses on the policy areas of education and training, employment and entrepreneurship; social inclusion; health and well-being; participation; volunteering; youth and the world, and creativity and culture.

The *Europe 2020 Strategy* and its flagship initiatives emphasise the importance of the design and delivery of policies that equip all young people with the skills and competencies they need to play their part in a knowledge-based economy and society. It specifically acknowledges the role of youth policy in this regard. The 2008 Council of Europe's *Youth Policy Agenda 2020* sets out a medium-term strategy development with priority areas including:<sup>75</sup>

- Human rights and democracy
- Living together in diverse societies
- Social inclusion of young people.

At a global level, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC), which defines 'a child' as anyone under the age of 18 years, expresses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a child-specific way, provides additional protections to children given their particular vulnerability, and takes into account that the fulfilment of their rights is often dependent on the actions of others, such as parents.<sup>76</sup> In particular, under Article 12 children have the right to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity.

**FIGURE 3: NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT INFORMING THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY**


■ Acts   
 ■ Plans   
 ■ Guidelines   
 ■ Frameworks   
 ■ Standards   
 ■ Reviews   
 ■ Reports   
 ■ Strategies   
 ■ Committees   
 ■ Policy   
 ■ Policy Statements

# 3 NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY CONSULTATION

An extensive National Youth Strategy consultation took place from December 2014 to March 2015. It involved over 4,600 participants, including young people, those working with and for young people, and others with an interest in youth, including Government departments and State agencies (*see Appendix 3 for details*). The views of young people from previous consultations helped to inform the process. These included reports such as: *Life of a Child and Young Person in Ireland*,<sup>77</sup> *Being Young and Irish*,<sup>78</sup> and *Growing Up in Ireland*.<sup>79</sup> *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* was informed by consultation with over 66,700 children and young people under the age of 18; of these, 81% were primary school students and 19% were secondary school students.<sup>80</sup> As part of the EU Structured Dialogue Process (January 2013 to June 2014),<sup>81</sup> some 800 young people were consulted in Ireland on the theme of social inclusion.

Individual young people and small groups of young people (supported by a youth worker) were invited to respond to an online survey, which was developed in collaboration with Spunout.ie. Those working with young people were surveyed separately. The responses from the online surveys helped to prepare specific questions for three consultation events: one for young people aged under 18 years and two for other stakeholders, which included those who are working directly with young people and young people aged 18 years and over. The purpose of these events was to add depth to the online survey findings. The main results of the consultation, in terms of key priority areas to inform the development of the National Youth Strategy, are summarised in Table 2.





**TABLE 2: PRIORITIES ARISING FROM THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS**

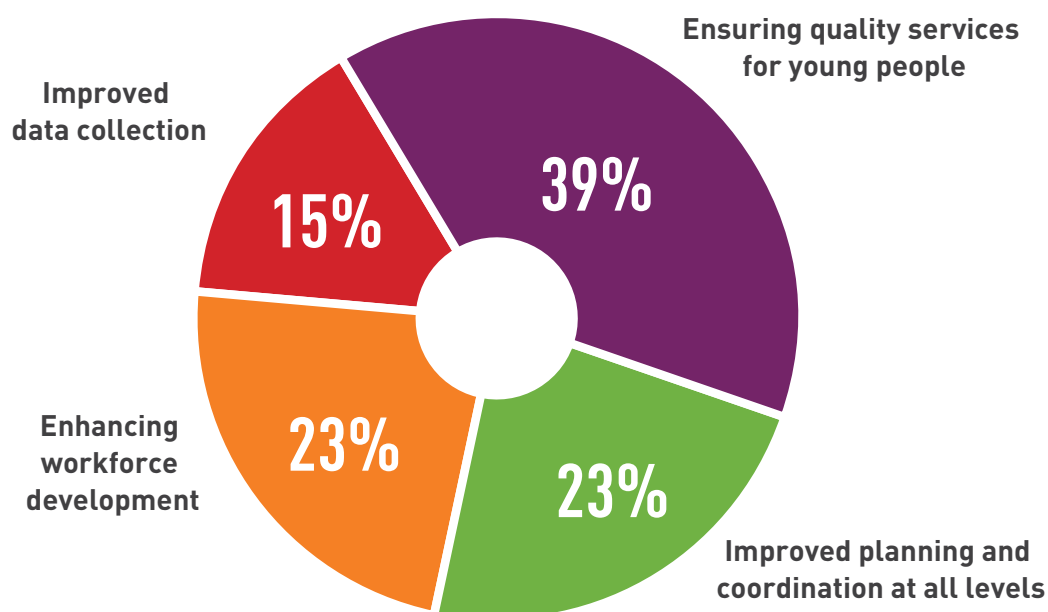
NATIONAL OUTCOME	PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY YOUNG PEOPLE AND STAKEHOLDERS
<b>1. Active and healthy, physical and mental well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support all young people to engage in physical activity, and emphasise its connection to, and impact on, mental health</li><li>• Improve access to, and consistency in delivery of, mental health services for young people, regardless of location</li><li>• Support young people with regard to relationships and sexuality, and provide access to timely and appropriate information</li></ul>
<b>2. Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve accessibility, flexibility and inclusiveness to educational opportunity, to enable lifelong learning and development, while maintaining a focus on the development of the whole young person</li><li>• Recognise and validate young people's achievement in non-formal and informal learning</li><li>• Address issues of transition from second-level to third-level education, including career guidance</li></ul>
<b>3. Safe and protected from harm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep young people safe and protected at home, at school and in the community</li><li>• Provide safe spaces and places for young people to socialise and develop</li><li>• Support young people at critical transition points, such as the move from care/justice system to independent living</li></ul>
<b>4. Economic security and opportunity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support transitions through the education system and from education to work</li><li>• Place more emphasis on career guidance and information provision</li><li>• Improve employment measures</li></ul>

*continued*

NATIONAL OUTCOME	PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY YOUNG PEOPLE AND STAKEHOLDERS
<b>5. Connected, respected and contributing to their world</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve young people in planning and decision-making, including at local level, to address the democratic deficit</li> <li>Promote the political engagement of young people</li> <li>Ensure sustainable communities</li> </ul>

Those working with young people were asked an additional question, i.e. to rank from a list of four suggested areas the priority supports to ensure effective implementation of the Strategy. As indicated in Figure 4, ‘ensuring quality services for young people’ came first, followed by ‘enhancing workforce development’, ‘improved planning and coordination at all levels’, and lastly, ‘improved data collection’.

**FIGURE 4: PRIORITY SUPPORTS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION – THOSE WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**



Further information and analysis of the consultation’s findings are included in *Informing the Development of the National Youth Strategy* (available on [www.dcyi.ie](http://www.dcyi.ie)).

## INFORMING THE STRATEGY

In building on the youth-specific policy commitments outlined in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, and in line with current and emerging policy, the National Youth Strategy addresses the current socio-economic needs and aspirations of young people aged between 10 and 24 years. It is informed by an understanding of 'youth' as a period of development between childhood and adulthood. In focusing on developing the intellectual and emotional capacities of young people through assets and strengths-based ways of working, the Strategy provides additional supports for those experiencing adversity, while ensuring that *all* young people have opportunities to explore life, build diverse experiences and be able to access services without discrimination.

In line with the 2015 identified cross-sectoral priority being advanced by DCYA under *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, the National Youth Strategy promotes a prevention and early intervention approach to maximise benefits for young people, while recognising the need to optimise the supports available in the community, and from family, other adults and peers.

Alongside the 2015 *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*, the National Youth Strategy promotes young people's voices being heard and acted upon in planning and decision-making processes at all levels. Consistent with this, the Strategy responds to the priority areas identified by young people and stakeholders in the national consultation process, and the supports for effective implementation identified by those working with young people.

The Strategy is based on evidence, and proposes additional priority actions for this age cohort that are feasible having regard to available resources. It also proposes improved data systems to support practice and improve accountability, while supporting a more coordinated approach to planning at national and local levels, and improved collaboration within and between sectors.

Young people identified mental health, education, inclusion, employment, access to services, youth work/youth organisations and supporting transitions as areas requiring a focus.

# 4 THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY 2015–2020

This section sets out Ireland's National Youth Strategy for the period 2015–2020, in terms of its aim, outcome areas and associated objectives. Government departments, State agencies, and other stakeholders are already working to address these objectives through the Implementation Plan for the first phase of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and through the cross-cutting annual priorities agreed by the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium. This work is referenced below.

The National Youth Strategy identifies additional **priority actions** for the period 2015–2017 to achieve these objectives, and indicates stakeholders involved in progressing these priority actions.

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, Government departments; State agencies; community and voluntary sectors, including youth, arts and sports sectors; business; research community; young people (*see Appendix 4 for details*).

## AIM, OBJECTIVES, AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

In line with the vision for all young people set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, the **aim** of the National Youth Strategy is:

To enable all young people to realise their maximum potential, by respecting their rights and hearing their voices, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

To achieve this aim, a number of **objectives** have been identified in relation to each of the five national outcome areas:

1. Active and healthy, physical and mental well-being
2. Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Safe and protected from harm
4. Economic security and opportunity
5. Connected, respected and contributing to their world.



## OUTCOME 1: ACTIVE AND HEALTHY, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

<b>Objective 1</b>	Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle, in particular with regard to their physical, mental and sexual health and well-being.
<b>Objective 2</b>	Young people benefit from involvement in recreational and cultural opportunities, including youth work, arts, and sports.

Government, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Implementing the *Social, Personal and Health Education Programme* in primary and post-primary schools
- Implementing the *Healthy Ireland Outcomes Framework*
- Communicating and implementing the *National Physical Activity Plan* including:
  - Encouraging and expanding the *Get Active Guiding Framework*
  - Implementing the *Schools PE Programme*
  - Promoting participation by schools in the *Active Schools Flag Initiative*
- Developing mental health services in line with the *Vision for Change (2006)*
- Conducting a review of *Reach Out: National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention, 2005-2014*
- Implementing the *National Drugs Strategy, 2009-2016*
- Auditing play spaces and facilities by age to inform future provision
- Implementing the *Arts in Education Charter*
- Implementing the *National Sexual Health Strategy, 2015-2020* (forthcoming)
- Implementing the *National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan (2013-2015)*
- Supporting the National Youth Health and National Youth Arts Programmes.

**THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS OVER THE PERIOD 2015–2017  
TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10–24 YEARS ARE TO:**

NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS 2015–2017	TICKS INDICATE STAKEHOLDERS		
	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	STATE AGENCIES	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<b>OUTCOME 1: ACTIVE AND HEALTHY, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING</b>			
<b>1.1</b> Progress actions set out in the <i>National Physical Activity Plan</i> as they relate to young people, including maintaining participation in sports during adolescence and young adulthood and encouraging more physical activity in young people's everyday lives	✓	✓	✓
<b>1.2</b> Continue to support and build on existing youth arts provision nationally and locally, and promote opportunities for young people to contribute ideas to their communities in the form of art or other media of their choice.	✓	✓	✓
<b>1.3</b> Identify ways in which arts, culture, sports and youth organisations can cooperate at a local level to enhance quality and developmental opportunities for young people	✓		✓
<b>1.4</b> Develop a <i>National Obesity Policy and Action Plan</i> which will focus on prevention, treatment and research, and will include consultation to ensure that the views of young people are heard	✓	✓	✓
<b>1.5</b> Implement <i>Tobacco Free Ireland</i> through the prioritisation of the protection of children and the de-normalisation of smoking	✓	✓	✓
<b>1.6</b> Progress the actions set out in the <i>National Sexual Health Strategy</i> to ensure that young people living in Ireland will receive comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education/information and will have access to appropriate prevention and promotion services	✓	✓	✓
<b>1.7</b> Pursue the actions set out in the <i>National Drugs Strategy 2009–2016</i> to ensure that young people receive comprehensive education and information, and have access to appropriate prevention interventions and treatment services	✓	✓	✓
<b>1.8</b> Promote quality-assured, online youth mental health services among young people and within youth work and education settings	✓		✓
<b>1.9</b> Promote programmes that address positive self-image and body confidence in formal and non-formal education settings	✓		✓

NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS 2015–2017	TICKS INDICATE STAKEHOLDERS		
	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	STATE AGENCIES	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<b>OUTCOME 1: ACTIVE AND HEALTHY, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING</b>			
<b>1.10</b> Implement <i>Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015–2020</i> (2015) as it relates to young people	✓	✓	✓
<b>1.11</b> Optimise the potential of youth services in promoting suicide prevention as part of those strategies and plans which focus on young people	✓		✓
<b>1.12</b> Promote the guidelines document <i>Technology, mental health and suicide prevention in Ireland: A good practice guide</i> <sup>82</sup> to ensure the safe and responsible delivery of online support services for young people	✓	✓	✓
<b>1.13</b> Explore ways of making health facilities more youth friendly, including transitions from child to adult facilities and services	✓	✓	✓
<b>1.14</b> Raise awareness and understanding among education, health and youth service providers of the signs that young people have caring responsibilities, and how this caring role may impact on their education, health and recreation pursuits.	✓	✓	✓

**YOUNG PEOPLE  
SAY**

If you're active and healthy,  
you can do more and get on in  
life. Young people need more  
information about how to be and  
keep active and healthy.

## OUTCOME 2: ACHIEVING FULL POTENTIAL IN ALL AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Objective 3** Young people's core skills, competencies and attributes are enhanced and promoted through accessible, responsive, formal and non-formal education and learning opportunities.
- Objective 4** Young people benefit from strengthened transition supports at all levels as they move through the education system.

Government, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Working to improve the quality and timeliness of services for children and young people
- Implementing the *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life Strategy*
- Implementing the new *Framework for Junior Cycle*
- Implementing the *ICT Skills Action Plan, 2014–2018*
- Implementing the *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014–2019*
- Implementing the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (2011)*
- Implementing *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) (2005)*
- Progressing *New Direction Review of Adult Day services for people with a disability* (including school-leavers)
- Implementing *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2008)*
- Supporting the contribution of youth work to young people's personal and social development
- Implementing the *National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (2014)*
- Implementing the *Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy (2006)*
- Implementing the *Intercultural Education Strategy 2010–2015*
- Providing opportunities for early school-leavers to engage with further education and training within the framework of youth and educational welfare services.

## YOUNG PEOPLE SAY

"People learn in very different ways. The education system needs to fit the student, the student should not need to fit the system."



**THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS OVER THE PERIOD 2015–2017  
TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-24 YEARS ARE TO:**

NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS 2015–2017	TICKS INDICATE STAKEHOLDERS		
	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	STATE AGENCIES	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<b>OUTCOME 2: ACHIEVING FULL POTENTIAL IN ALL AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>			
<b>2.1</b> Promote the development of an integrated approach to support young people at risk of educational disadvantage and early school-leaving	✓	✓	✓
<b>2.2</b> Promote innovative projects and initiatives which support young people at critical transition points in their lives	✓		✓
<b>2.3</b> Work to realign the <i>Youth Service Grant Scheme</i> which supports non-formal learning opportunities for young people with the five national outcomes	✓		✓
<b>2.4</b> Strengthen cooperation between formal education and non-formal learning sectors to address early school-leaving, including the use of flexible, youth-friendly approaches	✓	✓	✓
<b>2.5</b> Develop a national system for recognition of non-formal and informal learning in line with the <i>EU Council Recommendation 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning</i>	✓	✓	✓
<b>2.6</b> Support young people's opportunities for learning and development through initiatives such as the Erasmus+ Programme	✓		✓
<b>2.7</b> Promote the use of new technologies and support the acquisition of digital skills for young people	✓		✓
<b>2.8</b> Enhance career development (including career guidance and counselling services, and work experience) for young people in schools and youth information settings, with a stronger emphasis on identifying a young person's abilities and interests	✓		✓
<b>2.9</b> Support young people as they move from primary to post-primary education through the <i>Education Passport</i> and from second-level to third-level education through the implementation of <i>Supporting a Better Transition from Second Level to Higher Education</i> (2015)	✓	✓	✓
<b>2.10</b> Promote a focus in policy and services on supporting transition through education, into work and independent living in youth, educational welfare and labour market programmes.	✓	✓	✓

### OUTCOME 3: SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM HARM

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Objective 5</b> | Young people, and in particular vulnerable and marginalised young people, are supported to feel safe at home, in school, in their communities and online, and are empowered to speak out when feeling unsafe or vulnerable. |
| <b>Objective 6</b> | Young people have safe places and spaces where they can socialise and develop.  |

Government, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Progressing the *Children First Bill, 2014* and associated revision of *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011)*
- Working to rebalance emphasis and resources towards prevention and early intervention, while ensuring effective crisis intervention
- Progressing the messages set out in the *High Level Policy Statement on Supporting Parents and Families (2015)*
- Implementing the *Action Plan on Bullying (2013)*, including online and homophobic bullying
- Cross-Government Anti-Bullying Oversight group to monitor implementation of the various strands of anti-bullying policy
- Implementing the recommendations of the Report of the *Internet Content Advisory Group 2014*
- Publishing the *Second National Action Plan (NAP)* to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings
- Continuing to implement *Tackling Youth Crime – A Youth Justice Action Plan, 2014–2018*
- Developing child and youth-friendly communities through Local Authorities adopting appropriate policies and objectives in County/City Development Plans
- Developing *National Guidelines on Planning for Child-friendly Communities*
- Developing a *Child Injury Prevention Action Plan* (accident/injury prevention, including road, water and farm safety)
- Exploring the recommendations arising from the review of the implementation of *Every Child a Home: A Review of the Implementation of the Youth Homelessness Strategy* with relevant agencies, so as to enable an integrated and comprehensive service response to children aged under 18 years presenting as out of home.

**THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS OVER THE PERIOD 2015–2017  
TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10–24 YEARS ARE TO:**

NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS 2015–2017	TICKS INDICATE STAKEHOLDERS		
	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	STATE AGENCIES	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<b>OUTCOME 3: SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM HARM</b>			
<b>3.1</b> Support parents and families in raising young people through parenting education programmes, online and helpline services, targeted supports and interventions	✓	✓	✓
<b>3.2</b> Support compliance with the current <i>Child Protection Guidance</i> and the <i>Children First Act</i> (forthcoming), including embedding mandatory reporting in work practices and publication of Child Safeguarding Statements by providers of relevant services as required under the legislation	✓	✓	✓
<b>3.3</b> Support compliance with <i>National Standards for Residential Centres for Children and Adults with Disabilities</i>	✓	✓	✓
<b>3.4</b> Educate young people about staying safe online, and explore the provision of online safety training for parents and those working with young people through joined-up efforts and programmes in formal and non-formal education settings	✓		✓
<b>3.5</b> Enhance the number of safe spaces for young people to meet by exploring the possibilities of providing access to school and community facilities in 'out-of-school time'	✓		✓
<b>3.6</b> Review youth café support and provision to take account of recent evidence and evaluation	✓		✓
<b>3.7</b> Examine the situation of young people up to age 24 in the context of the <i>Child Injury Prevention Action Plan</i>	✓		✓
<b>3.8</b> Promote a stronger role for youth services in supporting young people as they transition from statutory support services (including care arrangements and residential services) into independent living.	✓		✓

**YOUNG PEOPLE  
SAY**

“Feeling safe and protected occurs when I’m with my family and friends who love me and when I’m at school or other events that are run efficiently. To feel safe that if something happens to me or my family, my government will be there for us.”

## OUTCOME 4: ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY

<b>Objective 7</b>	Young people are better able to participate in the labour market through enhanced employability skills that complement formal learning and training qualifications and entrepreneurship opportunities.
<b>Objective 8</b>	Young people are a particular focus in policies that address social inclusion and poverty.

Government, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Working to implement a multi-dimensional approach to tackling child poverty, building on the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion* and informed by the *EU Recommendation on Investing in Children*
- Updating and extending the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion* for the period 2015–2017
- Implementing the actions set out in *The Action Plan for Jobs*
- Continuing to implement the comprehensive reform programme published in *Pathways to Work 2013*, with quarterly published updates on implementation of 50 action points
- Implementing the recommendations in the *Further Education and Training Strategy, 2014–2019*, which include strengthening the links with industry and promoting entrepreneurial skills
- Implementing *Pathways to Work – The implementation of the EU Council Recommendation for a Youth Guarantee*, for gradual implementation over the coming years
- Implementing *Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy (2013)*
- Supporting youth entrepreneurship through initiatives such as the *Young Entrepreneur Award Scheme* and *Student Entrepreneur Awards*.

## YOUNG PEOPLE SAY

“More supports in school for young people so they can explore what the best career options can be, linked to skills, interests, passions etc.”

**THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS OVER THE PERIOD 2015–2017  
TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-24 YEARS ARE TO:**

NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS 2015–2017	TICKS INDICATE STAKEHOLDERS		
	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	STATE AGENCIES	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<b>OUTCOME 4: ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY</b>			
<b>4.1</b> Promote and develop opportunities for those young people furthest from the labour market through measures such as a Youth Employability Initiative, which can be delivered by youth services	✓	✓	✓
<b>4.2</b> Continue to develop specific social welfare schemes to effectively support persons with disabilities, including into employment (in the context of the forthcoming Comprehensive Employment Strategy)	✓		
<b>4.3</b> Enhance opportunities for young people in labour market programmes such as the Youth Guarantee by incorporating a role for youth services	✓		✓
<b>4.4</b> Strengthen links between formal and non-formal learning providers, businesses and employment agencies, to improve job opportunities for young people	✓		✓
<b>4.5</b> Promote and support youth entrepreneurship initiatives in schools and youth work settings	✓	✓	✓
<b>4.6</b> Facilitate engagement and interaction between local youth services and the Local Enterprise Offices/Microfinance Ireland and Intreo Centres	✓	✓	✓
<b>4.7</b> Promote and support employers' engagement with the <i>Employment and Youth Activation Charter</i>	✓		
<b>4.8</b> Promote youth-friendly work places and ensure that young people have access to information on employment rights and responsibilities.	✓		✓



## OUTCOME 5: CONNECTED, RESPECTED AND CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR WORLD

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Objective 9</b>  | Young people are included in society, are environmentally aware, their equality and rights are upheld, their diversity celebrated, and they are empowered to be active global citizens. |
| <b>Objective 10</b> | Young people's autonomy is supported, their active citizenship fostered, and their voice strengthened through political, social and civic engagement.                                   |

Government, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Rolling out the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making* (2015)
- Implementing the actions outlined in *The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007–2016*
- Implementing the goals and actions in the *Intercultural Education Strategy* (2010)
- Implementing the *National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy* (2011)
- Strengthening social inclusion measures among, and integration of, migrant children and young people
- Implementing the *National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development* (2014)
- Implementing the *Development Education Strategy 2007–2015*
- *Politics and Society* to be introduced as an optional Leaving Certificate subject
- Complying with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*
- Maintaining and extending the *Rural Transport Programme* with other local transport services.

YOUNG PEOPLE  
SAY

"If young people are respected they will be happier and then more inclined to contribute; they will look for ways that they can be connected."

**THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS OVER THE PERIOD 2015–2017  
TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10–24 YEARS ARE TO:**

NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PRIORITY ACTIONS 2015–2017	TICKS INDICATE STAKEHOLDERS		
	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	STATE AGENCIES	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<b>OUTCOME 5: CONNECTED, RESPECTED AND CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR WORLD</b>			
<b>5.1</b> Implement the <i>National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making</i> (2015)	✓	✓	✓
<b>5.2</b> Support and promote young people's involvement in Comhairle na nÓg, the EU Structured Dialogue process, and other youth participation initiatives	✓		✓
<b>5.3</b> Promote the development of a positive school environment for all students, including marginalised young people, for example through effective Student Councils	✓		✓
<b>5.4</b> Promote social entrepreneurship education and active citizenship opportunities in schools and youth organisations	✓		✓
<b>5.5</b> Work to increase young people's political engagement through the promotion of voter education programmes and other initiatives	✓		✓
<b>5.6</b> Establish a cross-sector/cross-agency working group to consider the needs of young carers and to work towards aligning supports for young carers to help ensure an integrated and coordinated response to their needs	✓	✓	✓
<b>5.7</b> Support implementation of the <i>National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2011</i> , revised as appropriate under a forthcoming consultation process	✓	✓	✓
<b>5.8</b> Establish a baseline of education for sustainable development and development education programmes that are currently available in the youth sector, and promote the conservation and protection of the environment through practical environmental projects for young people	✓		✓
<b>5.9</b> Create a forum of interests to support, through cross-sectoral collaboration, the implementation in the youth sector of the new <i>Sustainable Development Goals (2015)</i> , the <i>National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (2014)</i> and the <i>Irish Aid Development Education Strategy</i> (forthcoming)	✓		✓
<b>5.10</b> Promote and support young people's right to self-determination and self-expression in relation to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity	✓		✓
<b>5.11</b> Promote developmental volunteering opportunities for young people across the EU and internationally through programmes such as <i>Erasmus+</i> , <i>Youth on the Move</i> and the <i>United Nations Youth Delegate Programme</i> .	✓		✓

# 5 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The National Youth Strategy recognises the importance of strong engagement by, and collaboration between, statutory bodies/agencies and non-governmental organisations in the pursuit of better outcomes for young people. It acknowledges the interconnection between all of these areas of work, and that young people benefit most when the work of all stakeholders at national and local levels is mutually reinforcing. The effective implementation of the Strategy is the shared responsibility of Government, State agencies and other stakeholders who are involved in developing policy and providing services (see Figure 5). DCYA will provide national leadership in harnessing this collective effort, and in ensuring that national policy dovetails with local implementation.

**FIGURE 5: WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE FIVE NATIONAL OUTCOMES**



Yellow highlighted text denotes Government department responsible for that national outcome area.

The National Youth Strategy Implementation Framework sits squarely within the implementation of the overall *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* policy framework, thereby ensuring a connected, coherent and sustainable approach to addressing key issues affecting services and supports which impact on the lives of children and young people. It comprises a number of cross-cutting 'enablers' and utilises the existing implementation structures in place under *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* in achieving the Strategy's aims and objectives.

## ENABLERS

In order to ensure that services are focused on prevention and early intervention, improving collaboration and coordination, and providing current, relevant and appropriate information and supports to young people, over the period 2015–2017 DCYA will progress a number of 'enabling actions' across the five national outcome areas for children and young people (see *Table 3*). These will serve to maximise support for the Strategy through the new implementation structures, while optimising planning and delivery at local level, and strengthening arrangements for measuring progress.

**TABLE 3: DCYA-LED ENABLING ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY**

ENABLERS – DCYA-LED ACTIONS WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS	DCYA	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<b>ENSURING QUALITY SERVICES</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support workforce (professional and volunteer) expertise and skills</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop efficient and user-friendly ways of collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data at local, regional and national level to inform service planning, delivery, assessment and continuous improvement</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQSFI)<sup>83</sup> and Quality Standards for Volunteer-led Youth Groups and explore their relevancy and application to wider youth settings and services</li> </ul>	✓	✓

*continued*

ENABLERS – DCYA-LED ACTIONS WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS	DCYA	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with practitioners, academics and researchers, as appropriate, in the development of any planned commissioned research outputs, including in respect of key outputs developed as part of the Growing Up in Ireland Study</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<b>FOCUS ON PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance effective prevention and early intervention through the reformed targeted youth programme as recommended in the <i>Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes (2014)</i> while ensuring a preventive focus in and across all other universal programmes and schemes within DCYA which focus on the development of young people</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen and grow parenting and family support as an effective prevention and early intervention measure; promote the availability of a continuum of local support to all parents and families</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the optimum manner through which learning in the areas of prevention and early intervention might be mainstreamed in line with developments under <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> and other related DCYA-led initiatives</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<b>IMPROVING COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support engagement between Children and Young People's Services Committees and Local Community Development Committees in relation to the development of the Local Economic and Community Plans</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise the implementation structures established under <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> to ensure better outcomes for young people</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<b>ACCESS TO QUALITY INFORMATION</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate access to quality information through various media for young people, parents and families</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review existing youth information provision and support in the context of achieving the five national outcomes for young people</li> </ul>	✓	✓

## Implementation supports

The implementation structures established by DCYA for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, provide an extensive supporting and enabling network for the National Youth Strategy (see *Appendix 2: Implementation structures for Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*). These structures, which bring together stakeholders across Government, State agencies, the community and voluntary sectors and the voices of children and young people, will be optimised to ensure an effective connection between national policy and local planning and service delivery.



The **Children and Young People's Policy Consortium** comprises high-level representation from Government departments and agencies, as well as key experts and representatives from a range of sectors and settings working with children and young people. Its function is to oversee and drive the effective implementation of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and its constituent strategies within their respective spheres of responsibility, across departments, agencies and sectors.

The **Sponsors Group** is a strategic group sitting underneath the Consortium. It comprises the lead departments in relation to the five national outcomes for children and young people of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, plus one sponsor for the transformational goals (see Table 4). Members of the Sponsors Group are also members of the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium.

**TABLE 4: LEAD DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	SPONSOR
<b>Outcome 1</b> Active and healthy, physical and mental well-being	Department of Health
<b>Outcome 2</b> Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development	Department of Education and Skills
<b>Outcome 3</b> Safe and protected from harm	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
<b>Outcome 4</b> Economic security and opportunity	Department of Social Protection
<b>Outcome 5</b> Connected, respected and contributing to their world	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
<b>Transformational goals and Chair of the Sponsors Group</b>	Department of Children and Youth Affairs

The **Advisory Council** harnesses expertise and experience from the community and voluntary sectors, from academia and from independent experts and individuals who have specific expertise in working with and for children and young people. It provides an enabling forum in which to support implementation and address challenges in a solution-focused manner.

The **Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs) National Steering Group** represents CYPSCs at national level and acts as a vehicle to link implementation at local level with oversight by the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium. The National Steering Group is working to ensure that clear and effective connection and communication channels are in place between the national and local implementation infrastructures to ensure effective interagency working.

The **Comhairle na nÓg National Executive** (formerly the Dáil na nÓg Council) is the national participation structure for young people aged 12-18 years. Its

membership comprises 34 representatives elected by each of the Comhairle na nÓg located in each Local Authority area. It has direct and structured engagement with the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium and advises DCYA on progress in relation to the implementation of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and its constituent strategies.

The **EU Structured Dialogue Working Group** provides a national participation and consultation process whereby young people aged 15-25 years can feed into European youth policy. Membership of the Working Group comprises young people and youth organisations, experts on youth issues and public decision-makers. The youth representatives will have a formal link with the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium, thus ensuring that the views of young people inform the implementation of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and the National Youth Strategy.

### Local planning and delivery infrastructure

In addition to the national structures, the National Youth Strategy aims to make best use of local planning and delivery infrastructures in ensuring better outcomes for young people.

**Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs)** bring together a diverse range of statutory, community and voluntary providers of services to children and young people aged 0-24 years at local county level. They provide a forum for joint planning and coordination to ensure that children, young people and their families receive improved and accessible services. Their role is to enhance interagency cooperation and to realise the five national outcomes for children and young people as set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. Formerly called Children's Services Committees, they were re-named Children and Young People's Services Committees in 2014. These committees are an important vehicle for implementation at local level and also for driving local interagency work.

In addition to non-governmental organisations, various statutory agencies/bodies involved in the planning and delivery of services to young people at local level are represented on these Committees. These include Tusla – Child and Family Agency, the Health Service Executive, Education and Training Boards, Educational Welfare Services and Local Authorities.

The CYPSCs link in with **Local and Community Development Committees**, which comprise Local Authority members and officials, State agencies and people actively working with local development, community development, and economic, cultural and environmental organisations. Their role is to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programming. They draw on the expertise and experience of public and private actors within the relevant Local Authority area to provide effective and efficient services in their communities, and particularly those most in need of those services. These committees are responsible for developing six-yearly *Local Economic and Community Plans*.

## Measuring progress

*Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* is charting the way to improving outcomes for children and young people. It commits to the development of an indicator set to track progress across the five outcomes. The development of this indicator set, being led by DCYA, involves a two-stage process. Firstly, a data preparation stage, including a review of the child outcome indicator set and the development of an indicator inventory. Secondly, the development of a selection process which will utilise the implementation structure of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*.

While changes in population-level indicators are not easily attributable to a particular policy, programme or initiative, and do not always answer questions about 'why' particular results were or were not achieved, a set of key indicators will support the tracking of change over time. Key indicators, as relevant to the youth cohort, will be utilised to track progress in young people's lives over the lifespan of the Strategy.

The effectiveness of the National Youth Strategy in realising better outcomes for young people will be monitored and evaluated under the arrangements established for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, and assessed by tracking progress over time. In 2017, progress in relation to the priority actions will be considered to inform further development. A route forward will then be charted.

Finally, DCYA will establish a **National Youth Strategy Lead Team**, which will draw on expertise within the Department and other relevant experts, where required. This team will:

- Be the central point of contact within the Department for the Strategy
- Communicate the Strategy and its Implementation Framework to stakeholders
- Develop a timed project plan in discussion with stakeholders to support the progression and monitoring of priority actions
- Coordinate, progress and monitor implementation of the Strategy
- Support stakeholders in using the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* implementation structures to progress the Strategy
- Support the work of the youth constituency of the Advisory Council in relation to the Strategy
- Prepare periodic reports on progress in implementing the Strategy and coordinate these with reporting arrangements for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*.

In keeping with the evidence-informed approach of the National Youth Strategy, this Lead Team will ensure that implementation is guided by the learning from, and research into, policies, strategies and approaches, and on best practice in service delivery.

# GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

The descriptions set out below clarify the meaning and scope of key terms or phrases used in this document.

**Adolescence:** The World Health Organization defines adolescence as ‘human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, characterised by the onset of puberty’.

***Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People, 2014-2020:*** This coordinates policy across Government in line with the five national outcomes, with the aim of improving outcomes for children and young people up to the age of 24 years while transforming the effectiveness of existing policies, services and resources.

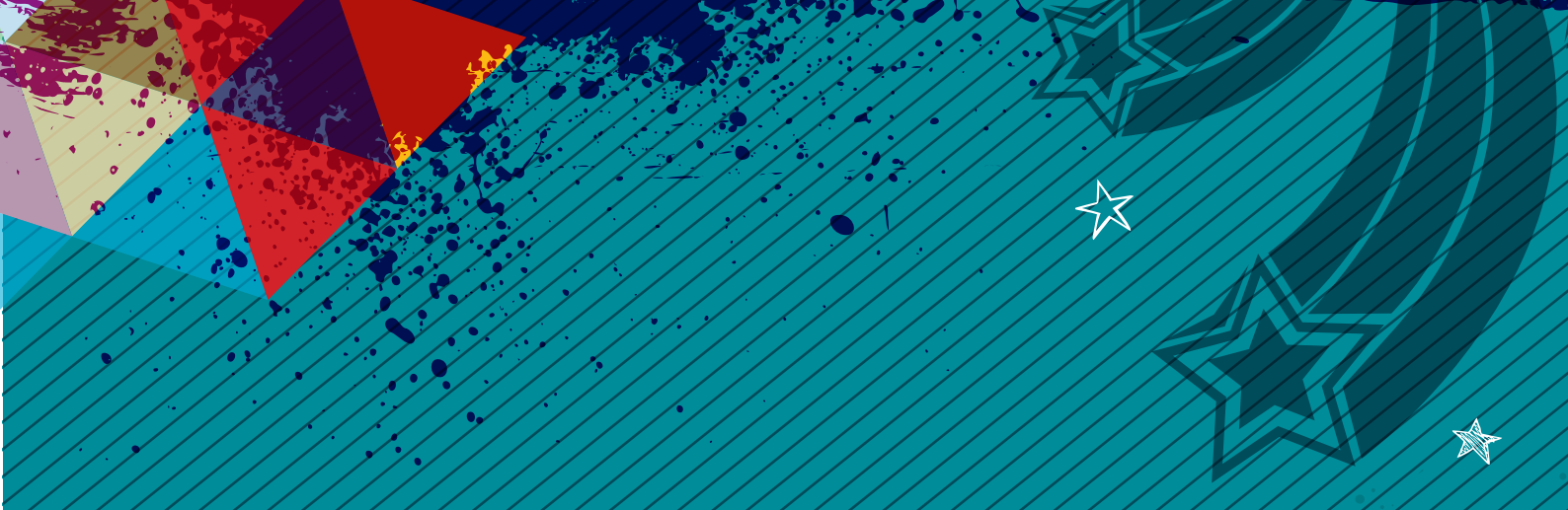
**Career guidance and counselling services:** Specific services, special courses and contacts with the world of work, aimed at young people’s development of career management skills.

**Child:** A ‘child’ is defined as any person under the age of 18 years, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Children and Young People’s Services Committees:** These are county-level committees bringing together the main statutory, community and voluntary providers of services to children and young people aged 0-24 years. They provide a forum for joint planning and coordination, in order to ensure that children, young people and their families receive improved and accessible services. Their role is to enhance interagency cooperation and to realise the five national outcomes for children and young people as set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. Formerly called Children’s Services Committees, they were re-named Children and Young People’s Services Committees in 2014, in order to more adequately reflect and align with recent national policy.

**Cross-sectoral coordination:** Coordination and integration of measures across different policy sectors. Horizontal coordination between different organisations and vertical coordination through different levels of Government are equally important.

**Disability:** In relation to a person, ‘disability’ means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment.<sup>84</sup>



**Early school-leaving:** All forms of leaving initial education and training before completing the upper secondary level.

**Education and Training Boards (ETBs):** Statutory authorities that have responsibility for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions. Education and Training Boards (ETBs) manage and operate second-level schools, further education colleges, multi-faith community national schools and a range of adult and further education centres delivering education and training programmes. ETBs are active in local communities through the direct provision of training and education programmes delivered in training centres, colleges and other training and educational settings.

**Formal education:** Education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous 'ladder' of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at ages 5-7 years and continuing up to 25 years of age.

**Informal learning:** Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. Informal learning is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. It can be unintentional from the learner's perspective.

**Local Community Development Committees:** These committees comprise Local Authority members and officials, State agencies and people actively working with local development, community development, and economic, cultural and environmental organisations. Their role is to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programming. They draw on the expertise and experience of public and private actors within the relevant Local Authority area to provide effective and efficient services in their communities, and particularly those most in need of those services.

**Marginalised/disadvantaged young people:** This term involves, but is not limited to, young people who are marginalised by location or geography or socio-economic reasons. It includes young people such as Travellers; Roma; young people from ethnic or religious minorities; migrants; refugees and asylum-seekers; young people with disabilities or with mental health issues; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people; young carers; young people in conflict with the law; young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET); young parents; those in care; those in direct provision; and lone parents under the age of 25 years.



**Non-formal education:** An organised educational process that is complementary to mainstream systems of education and training, and does not typically lead to certification.

**Non-formal learning:** A targeted learning process that supports the development of a person, his or her transformation potential, creativity, talents, initiative and social responsibility, and the development of associated knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. It encompasses learning outside institutional contexts (e.g. out of school), but can also take place in such contexts. Non-formal learning in youth work is often structured, based on learning objectives, learning time and specific learning support, is intentional and participation is voluntary. Non-formal learning is underpinned by a set of educational values.

**North/South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work (NSETC):** This Committee was established in 2006 to create a framework for the endorsement of youth work education and training that would ensure and support best practice, and facilitate professional mobility and exchange both on a north/south and east/west basis. To date, the Committee's role has been to assess all aspects of the quality of training for professional youth and community work offered by higher education institutions in Ireland and professionally, and to endorse the programmes submitted to it.

**Objective:** Statement of what needs to be achieved and by when.

**Outcome:** The changes or benefits for service users that happen as a result of a service being provided or a policy being implemented.

**Parents:** 'Parent' or 'parents' are defined as a person or persons with parental authority or responsibility. Parenting refers to all roles undertaken by parents or others acting *in loco parentis* in order to bring up a child/children.

**Quality services:** A quality service is one that is effective, efficient and economical in working with young people to achieve beneficial outcomes. Such a service may conform to standards in a relevant quality framework or is seen to embody widely accepted concepts of best practice.

**Risky behaviours:** Behaviours that potentially expose young people to harm or to significant risk of harm, which will prevent them reaching their potential. Some risky behaviours (e.g. curious or experimental behaviour) are normal and are part of growing up. However, some behaviours can put young people or others at risk and can escalate the behaviour to a harmful stage.

**School:** Encompasses all educational settings for young people, including primary, post-primary, higher level and centres of education such as Youthreach Centres.

**Social inclusion:** A process which ensures that those at risk of social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life, and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered to be the norm in the society in which they live. The aim is that everyone is able to participate in decision-making that affects their lives and to ensure access to fundamental rights.

**Stakeholders:** Those who have key roles in supporting young people as they transition from childhood to adulthood and in achieving the objectives of the National Youth Strategy. These include, but are not limited to, Government departments, State agencies, the community and voluntary sectors, Children and Young People's Services Committees and Local Community Development Committees.

**Structured Dialogue:** Structured Dialogue is a European Commission initiative that enables young people to be involved in the shaping of policies that affect them through continuous cooperation among youth representatives and decision-makers. It involves regular consultation with young people and youth organisations at all levels in EU countries, as well as dialogue with youth policy-makers at EU conferences organised by the Member State holding the EU Presidency.

**Targeted support/intervention:** Describes a service, programme, event or activity that is focused on a specific individual, group or issue, and is intended to achieve particular policy goals and outcomes (e.g. being healthy, avoiding crime, finding a job). It often involves working with young people who have a high level of need and with those who are experiencing particular or multiple forms of disadvantage.

**Young person:** A 'young person' refers to all young people, including marginalised and disadvantaged young people. It is defined as any person aged 10 years and under 25 years of age, in line with the upper age threshold of the Youth Work Act, 2001 and in line with the definition used by the United Nations.

**Youth:** This is a distinctive phase in the life course during which young people experience profound and rapid physical, neurological and psycho-social changes. When these occur is dependent on social, economic, cultural and other contextual factors.

**Youth Guarantee:** The 'Youth Guarantee' is a new EU initiative for 18-24 year-olds. Its objective is to ensure that young people receive a quality offer of employment, training, work experience or further education within four months of becoming unemployed. Ireland's *Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan* was launched in January 2014; it involved planned provision of 28,000 programme places specifically for the young unemployed. Aspects of the Plan, involving a partnership of key national and local stakeholders, including local youth services, have been piloted in Ballymun, Dublin, with funding support from the European Commission. The findings from this pilot are informing the national roll-out of the Youth Guarantee.

**Youth sector:** This includes, but is not limited to, youth work and other youth services provided by voluntary youth organisations.

**Youth work:** A diverse range of activities, topics and measures provided by a range of actors in assorted fields and settings. It is a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young people through their voluntary participation, and which (a) is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training, and (b) in Ireland is provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY TASK GROUP AND NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND ADVISORY GROUP

### National Youth Strategy Task Group

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Consider youth-specific strategic policy objectives to achieve the five national outcomes and the transformational goals over the lifetime of the Strategy.
- Consider how the National Youth Strategy links with the EU Youth Strategy and how EU policy developments in support of young people can be reflected.
- Having regard to priorities identified by Lead/Sponsor Departments, identify priorities to be achieved over the life of the National Youth Strategy and detail how these priorities could be achieved, by whom and by when.
- Consider how existing resources can be used to improve the contribution of current policies, programmes and services to the national outcomes for young people.
- Support the requirement to achieve a high-performing, quality-focused youth sector, where evidence guides policy, programmes and practice, and value for money is demonstrated.
- Take account of the Government's Public Spending Code and the findings and recommendations of the *Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes*, particularly in relation to issues of governance, accountability and performance.
- Act as a conduit for wider knowledge and expertise in constituent organisations and sectors for the purposes of enhancing the National Youth Strategy and generating support for its development and implementation.

## Members of the Task Group

DEPARTMENT/ORGANISATION	NAME
National Youth Council of Ireland	Mary Cunningham, Chair
Accenture	Ryan Shanks
Centre for Effective Services	Katie Burke
Centre for Effective Services	Dr John Bamber
Department of Children and Youth Affairs	Doreen Burke
Department of Children and Youth Affairs	Conor Rowley
Department of Education and Skills	Paul Caffrey/Tony Gaynor
Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government	Sean McLaughlin
Department of Health/Department of Children and Youth Affairs	Dr Sean Denyer
Department of Health	Kate O'Flaherty
Department of Health	Malachy Corcoran
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation	Conor Stokes
Department of Justice and Equality	Ruairi Gogan
Department of Social Protection	Adele Ryan
Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)	Jim McVeigh
National University of Ireland, Maynooth	Prof. Maurice Devlin
Tusla – Child and Family Agency	Oliver Mawe
Youth sector representative	John Cahill
Youth sector representative	Elaine Nevin
Secretariat	Breege Kiernan

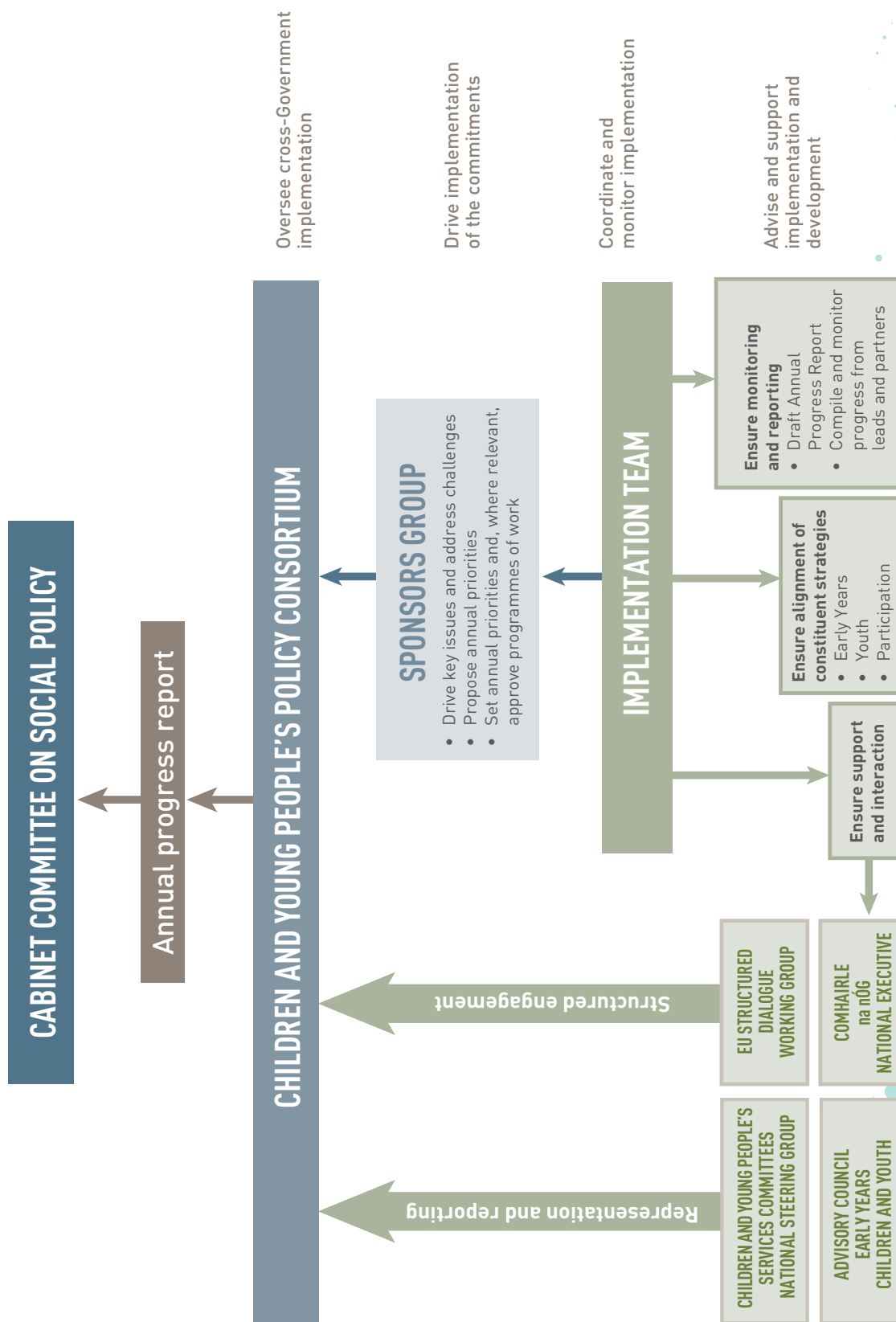
## National Youth Council of Ireland Advisory Group

The National Youth Council of Ireland brought together the following organisations to inform the development of the National Youth Strategy through its representation on the National Youth Strategy Task Group. The youth sector representatives on the National Youth Strategy Task Group, Elaine Nevin and John Cahill, attended the meetings of the NYCI Advisory Group.

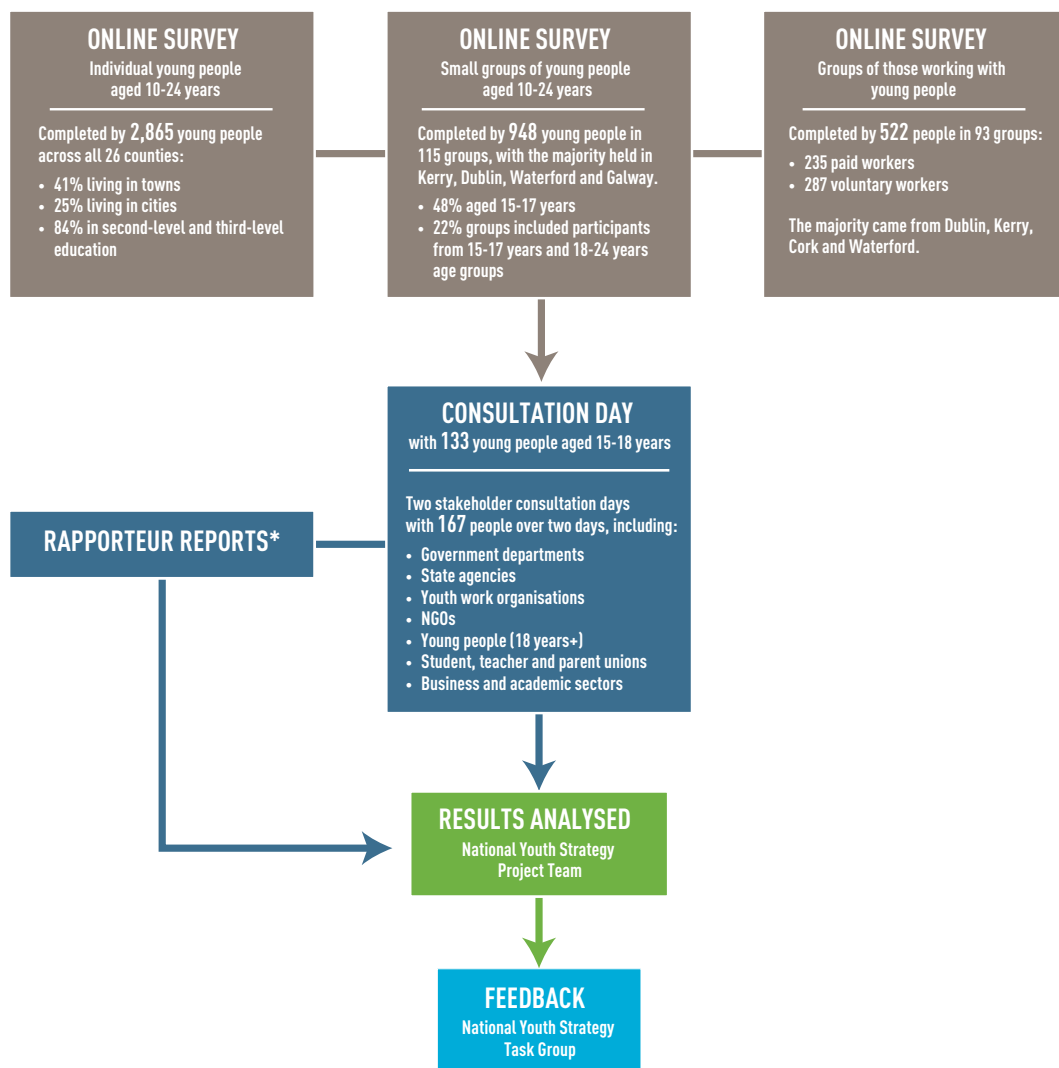
REPRESENTATIVE	ORGANISATION
David Barry	Irish Wheelchair Association
John Buckley	Spunout.ie/BeLonG To
Dr Patrick Burke	Youth Work Ireland
Michelle Carew	National Association of Youth Drama
Rachel Collier	Young Social Innovators
Edmond Connolly	Macra na Feirme
Enda Costello	Ógra Fianna Fáil
Philip Daley	Boys Brigade
James Doorley	National Youth Council of Ireland
Valerie Duffy	National Youth Council of Ireland
Gordon Hill	Crosscare
Marion Irwin-Gowan	Gaisce – The President’s Award
Jemma Lee	Irish Girl Guides
Mairéad Mahon	Swan Youth Service, Dublin
Marie-Claire McAleer	National Youth Council of Ireland
Yvonne McKenna	Gaisce – The President’s Award
Maedhbh Ní Dhónaill	Ógras
Denis O’Brien	Foróige
James O’Leary	Involve
Feidhlim Ó Seasnain	ECO UNESCO
Niamh Quinn	Foróige
Olive Ring	National Youth Council of Ireland
Stephen Spillane	Young Fine Gael
Anne Walshe	National Youth Council of Ireland
Fionn Scott	National Youth Council of Ireland
Ailish O’Neill	National Youth Council of Ireland
Martina O’Brien	National Youth Council of Ireland



## APPENDIX 2: IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURES FOR BETTER OUTCOMES, BRIGHTER FUTURES



## APPENDIX 3: OUTLINE OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY CONSULTATION PROCESS



\* Available from DCYA

## APPENDIX 4: STAKEHOLDERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

### Government departments:

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)  
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG)  
Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR)  
Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)  
Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG)  
Department of Education and Skills (DES)  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade/Irish Aid (DFAT)  
Department of Health (DH)  
Department of Justice and Equality (DJE)  
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI)  
Department of Social Protection (DSP)  
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTS)

### State agencies:

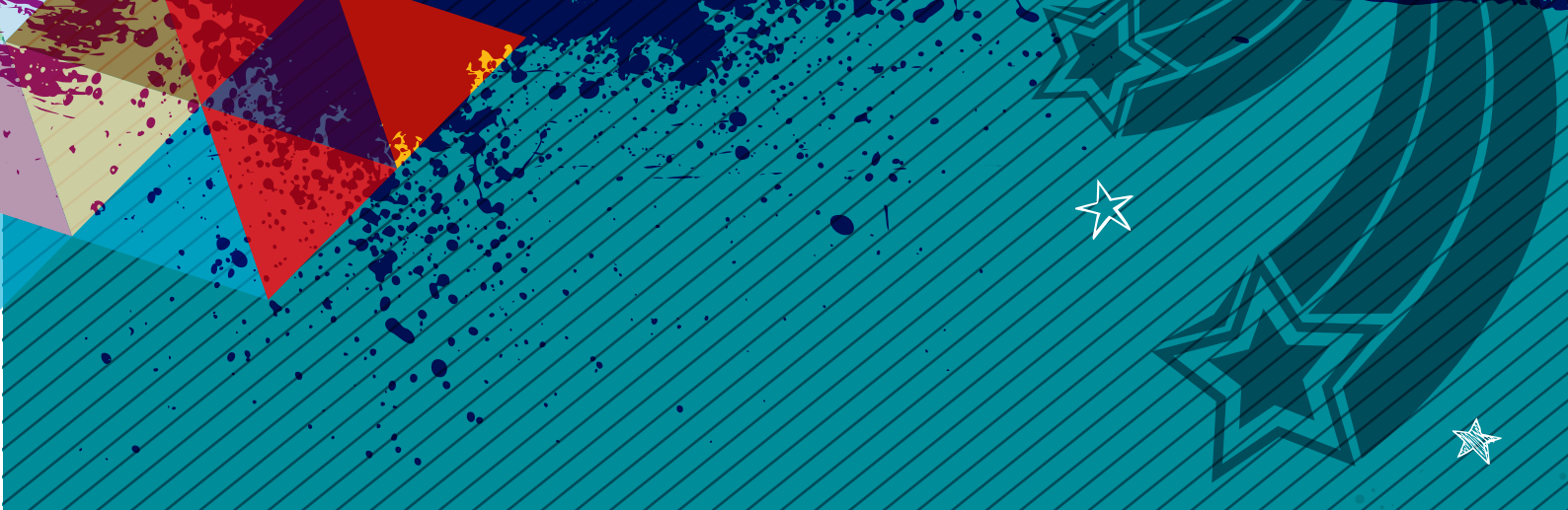

Education and Training Boards (ETBs)  
Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)  
Health Service Executive (HSE)  
Local Authorities  
Tusla – Child and Family Agency

### Other stakeholders:

Community and voluntary sectors, including the youth, arts and sports sectors  
Business sector  
Research community  
Young people

# REFERENCES

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## NOTES

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