



NATIONAL YOUTH HEALTH PROGRAMME

STATEMENT OF STRATEGY 2018-2022



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

The National Youth Health Programme is a strategic partnership of The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and the Health Service Executive (HSE).

THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. It is a membership led umbrella organisation that represents and supports community, voluntary and not for profit youth organisations across Ireland and uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people. It seeks to ensure that all young people are empowered to develop the skills and confidence to fully participate as active citizens in an inclusive society. NYCI's role is recognised in legislation through the Youth Work Act 2001.

THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS was set up with a mandate to put in place a unified framework of policy, legislation and service provision across Government for children and young people. Its mission is to lead the effort to improve outcomes for children and young people in Ireland.

THE HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE: The HSE provides public health and personal social services through medical professionals, hospitals and across a network of Community Health Organisations, health facilities and clinics at community level. The HSE's Health Promotion and Improvement service aims to embed preventative health measures and messages in models of health service delivery and in the settings where people are born, live, learn, socialise and work.

Edited by: Rachael Treanor, Louise Monaghan & Colleen Fahey

Designed by: Fuse.ie

First published in 2018 by:

© National Youth Council of Ireland 2019.

All rights reserved.

ISBN no: 978-1-900210-54-6

CONTENTS

Joint Foreword	1
Key Definitions	2
The Policy Context for Youth Health and Wellbeing	3
Role of the National Youth Council of Ireland and National Youth Health Programme	5
Vision And Mission	7
Our Operating Values	8
Our Key Strategic Themes	9
Strategic Theme 1	9
Strategic Theme 2	11
Strategic Theme 3	13
References	15
Appendix 1	16

JOINT FOREWORD

A healthier Ireland with better outcomes and brighter futures for all our young people is a bold vision. This strategy will help us realise it.

Healthy Ireland (2013-2025) sets out to achieve an island where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility. There are three dominant themes within Healthy Ireland, which include equality, wellbeing and empowerment. Without equality, we cannot have wellbeing; without empowerment we will not achieve equality.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People includes 'improving childhood health and well-being' among its key priorities. Outcome one 'Active and Healthy' aims for all children and young people to be physically healthy and able to make positive health choices, have good mental health and have a positive and respectful approach to relationships and sexual health.

Globally, youth has been identified by the World Health Organization as one of the critical transitions in the lifespan and as a period characterised by tremendous growth and changes (WHO 2002). In this context, it is important to note that Ireland is among the only European countries with a growing youth population¹ and that approximately one-third of our population is under the age of 25 years. The health and wellbeing of our young people is a public good: one of Ireland's most valuable resources and a key asset for Ireland's development as a society.

The youth work sector has been identified as having an essential role in promoting good health and wellbeing amongst young people. The National Youth Health Programme (NYHP) focuses on the youth specific cohort aged 10-24 in line with the Youth Work Act (2001), working with practitioners across the youth work sector. We recognise that the health, wellbeing and quality of life of Ireland's young people can be enhanced significantly if they are supported to build on their developing abilities and capacities. We know that what happens early in life has an impact in adulthood. Youth work adds value to the lives of young people, helping them develop lasting skills and attributes, and can particularly affect the lives of young people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged.

To this end, the NYHP is committed to making a defining contribution to building a culture across the youth work sector where developing understanding and skills, and promoting informed health choices are key to realising our ambition for Ireland as a place where all young people can experience positive health and wellbeing.

In this Strategy Statement for 2018 – 2022, the NYHP, together with our programme partners and informed by the key strategies have identified three themes which will make a significant difference to the way in which young people can achieve positive health and wellbeing outcomes. A range of sectors and partners – youth workers and volunteers, youth work organisations and youth service providers, the health sector, Education and Training Boards together with young people – must all be involved. By working together, we are confident that we can support our young people to enjoy good health and wellbeing as they grow and develop.

Mary Cunningham
Director
National Youth Council of Ireland



Cate Hartigan
Head of Health Promotion
and Improvement, HSE



Clare McNamara
Principal Officer in Youth Affairs,
Department of Children and
Youth Affairs



**An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige**
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

KEY DEFINITIONS

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Health means everyone achieving their potential to enjoy complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. Healthy people contribute to the health and quality of the society in which they live, learn and grow up. Health is much more than an absence of disease or disability, and individual health, and that of the country, affects the quality of everyone's lived experience. Health is an essential resource for everyday life, a public good, and an asset for health and human development.

Wellbeing is an integral part of this definition of health. It reflects the quality of life and the various factors which can influence it over the course of a person's life. Wellbeing also reflects the concept of positive mental health, in which a person can realise their own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, grow up productively and fruitfully, and be able to make a contribution to their community. Consideration of health and wellbeing requires a shift in focus from what can go wrong in young people's lives, to focusing on what makes their lives go well.

YOUTH WORK

In Ireland, the youth work sector has a long-standing history of working in the non-formal educational sector, providing personal and social development opportunities for children and young people. Youth work means a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is;

- a. Complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and
- b. Provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.

BENEFITS OF YOUTH WORK

Youth work adds value to the lives of all young people by helping them develop lasting skills and attributes. It can particularly affect the lives of those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, or are most challenged by school. It can help build confidence, provide role models, open up new experiences and provide a sense of belonging.

For young people — Youth work is educational, enjoyable, fulfilling and fun. Those who take part have more opportunities and options for the future.

For communities — Youth work is about adults and young people working together building community spirit and playing an active role in the development of their communities.

For society — Youth work tackles real social issues, combats disadvantage, enhances democratic life and is huge value for money

THE POLICY CONTEXT FOR YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Ireland has the youngest population in Europe with one third under 25 years old.

The majority of our children and young people are doing well, but we have some significant challenges to face as a society. For example, the number of children who are significantly overweight has trebled over the past decade while one in four people in Ireland will suffer from mental health problems at some stage in their life.

How we understand health and wellbeing will determine the way in which we respond to it. Typically, a community or an individual is seen from the perspective of its largest deficit. Assessing and building the strengths of individual young people and the assets of the youth work services and organisations in which support them, opens the door to new ways of thinking about improving health, wellbeing and quality of life.

In all of this, we need to remember that young people are not all the same. They are a diverse group of people with their own distinct challenges and life opportunities. We must ensure that no young person is left behind whether they are:

- Young people from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Young people with disabilities
- LGBTI+
- Young carers
- Young people with mental health issues
- Young parents
- Those involved in the juvenile justice system
- Young people who are homeless
- Those not in education, training or employment

Health is therefore recognised as an important area of cross sectoral youth policy and should be understood as an instrument for social inclusion, empowerment and active citizenship of young people. Programmes, interventions and initiatives must be put in place through youth work to support and empower all young people to experience positive health, wellbeing and quality of life. An asset based approach provides an ideal opportunity for youth organisations and youth services to respond to this challenge and to empower individuals and local communities to enhance their own health, wellbeing and ultimately quality of life.

In pursuing these themes, NYCI, together with its programme partners, is mindful that the National Youth Health Programme strategy sits within a broader policy context concerning children and young people's health and wellbeing. The NYHP aligns and supports the implementation of the outlined policies below. Appendix 1, illustrates the specific goals and actions the NYHP aid in implementing.

Healthy Ireland (Department of Health, 2013) is the national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people of all ages living in Ireland. The framework sets out a commitment to support and link existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that aim to improve the decision-making capacity of children and young people through strengthening self-esteem, resilience, responses to social and interpersonal pressure, health and media literacy.



Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures 2014-2020 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014) the national policy framework for children and young people. Outcome one, sets out aims that all children and young people are physically healthy and able to make positive healthy choices, have good mental health and have a positive and respectful approach to relationships and sexual health. Additionally, this framework prioritises the key transformational goals under each outcome area. In particular, the NYHP will take account of earlier intervention and prevention and ensuring quality services.



LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 sets out the goals and objectives for serving the needs of LGBTI+ people aged 10-24. The strategy aims to create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people to improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people and develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people.



The National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015) sets out a priority action as outcome one, to support young people to enjoy a healthy lifestyle, in particular with regard to their physical, mental and sexual health and well-being.



The National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020

identifies that young people should receive comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education and/or information with appropriate prevention and promotion services.



Connecting for Life 2015-2020

identifies that young people who have mental health problems or are vulnerable to suicide, should be supported to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve their mental health which can be achieved through the provision and delivery of training and education programmes.



A Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025

strives to empower young people and their communities to enhance their own skills to improve their health. The policy and action plan illustrate the 'Ten Steps Forward' framework which will lead out on reversing the obesity trends in Ireland.



Get Ireland Active: National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland

identifies that children and young people learn the necessary skills for confident engagement with physical activity and will have opportunities to adopt an active way of life.



Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

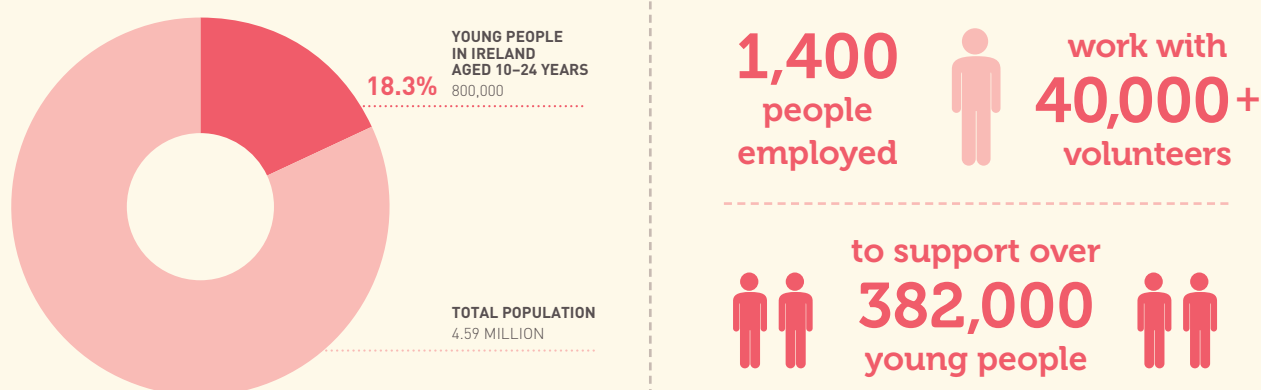
are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognise that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. SDG's ensure healthy lives and promotes wellbeing at all ages.



ROLE OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND AND NATIONAL YOUTH HEALTH PROGRAMME

Among the greatest strengths of the youth work sector is the level of participation it secures from young people. In 2015 the National Youth Strategy reported that there were over 800,000 young people in Ireland aged between 10 and 24 years, representing 18.3% of Ireland's total population of 4.59 million.

Almost 40% of young people in Ireland are involved in youth work organisations or youth services, with the vast majority of these organisations providing recreational, arts and sports activities. The youth work sector in Ireland is supported by a broad range of stakeholders, including approximately 40,000 volunteers and 1,400 professional youth workers. The youth work sector enables young people to engage critically with issues of importance on their own terms.²



The value of youth work as a developmental process is widely recognised. Youth work has a unique ability to combat health inequalities through a range of services, programmes and interventions which are geared to the age range, interests and capacities of the young people who are involved.

However, youth work must keep pace with changes in society and with the circumstances, experiences and expectations of young people. Ensuring relevance, quality, and consistency in terms of service development, programme delivery and targeted health and wellbeing outcomes are therefore at the heart of this strategy.

Youth work organisations and those in the youth work sector, need to continue to find the right balance between support for, and the autonomy of young people. Young people will continue to benefit from this combination of supportive and safe spaces as well as the autonomy to create an environment that promotes and enhances their own personal development, health and wellbeing.

Strengthening the capacity, skills and knowledge of youth workers and volunteers, and enabling the development of supportive youth service environments, will be critical to the NYHP ambition to promote and inform healthy behaviour amongst young people in the youth work sector.

It is also important to note that the National Youth Health Programme works with a range of organisations in the broader youth sector, notably Youthreach, Community Training Centres, Family Support Services and others.

THE NATIONAL YOUTH HEALTH PROGRAMME IS DEDICATED TO:

- Developing and promoting a culture within the youth sector which focuses on health and wellbeing
- Building capacity within the sector through the provision of training and evidence based resources for groups and youth workers using both a topics and settings approach
- Advocating on those issues that affect the health and wellbeing of young people
- Using our unique position as a conduit between grass roots experience and the development of public policy and national strategy in the area of youth health and wellbeing

It is through these various strands of work that the programme seeks to better enable young people, and particularly those in non-formal education and out-of-school settings, to increase control over and improve their health.

In this Statement of Strategy, the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), together with the National Youth Health Programme partners sets out its themes and priorities for 2018-2022 and describes how it aims to help Ireland become a country where all young people can experience positive health and wellbeing.

The National Youth Health Programme has sought to capture the focus of its work across three high level strategic themes. These themes can be seen as the constant elements which drive and define how the National Youth Health Programme works to bring about a positive and supportive culture of health and wellbeing within youth sector.

Each of the three strategic themes contain specific strategic priorities. All three strategic themes are of equal importance and enable the National Youth Health Programme to execute its mission and to contribute to the achievement of its vision.

On a yearly basis, the National Youth Health Programme, together with its programme partners will identify specific outputs under each strategic theme, which will in turn shape the Programme's annual work plan.

VISION

IRELAND:

A country where all young people can experience positive health and wellbeing.

MISSION

The National Youth Health Programme will make a defining contribution to the development of effective youth health promotion practices which support young people to make healthy and positive choices.

OUR OPERATING VALUES

The following values underpin the approach of the National Youth Health Programme and inform the design and delivery of our work.

YOUNG PERSON FOCUSED

The programme exists to serve the health and wellbeing related needs of young people within the youth sector. We are driven by a desire to recognise equity of access for young people to quality supportive health promoting youth organisations for all, irrespective of economic background, setting or location.

CONNECTED

We ensure relevance in what we do and how we do it by learning from the experience of the youth sector. We are committed to applying new thinking, relevant methods and approaches in response to health related challenges and opportunities faced by young people and those that work with them.

LEADERSHIP

Through our active engagement with the youth sector we harness valuable health related information and experience in order to inform the development and implementation of national policy and strategy. We are proactive in using national and international research to provide guidance, support and inspiration to the youth sector.

PARTNERSHIP

We work collaboratively with other stakeholders to bring about strategic and operational developments that empower youth organisations to make Ireland a healthier nation for young people.

OUR KEY STRATEGIC THEMES

01

STRATEGIC THEME 1:

We use our unique position to identify and collate the youth sector experiences of youth health issues in order to inform national policy and achieve better outcomes for young people.



WHY THIS STRATEGIC THEME IS IMPORTANT:

This enables us to provide a level of insight to better inform policy responses to the health and wellbeing related needs of young people in Ireland. The ecosystem of youth work organisations provides young people with an opportunity and a voice to influence both local and national developments.

Our relationship with youth organisations facilitates:

- The identification of young people’s health and wellbeing needs
- The prioritisation of young people’s health and wellbeing across relevant Government levels and Departments
- The progression and promotion of effective youth work responses to these needs

There is opportunity now to embed much of this good practice in the mainstream. There is a need to scale up local pockets of good practice into a consistent application of proven health and wellbeing, enabling approaches across the broader ecosystem of youth organisations, taking account of the Quality and Capacity Building Initiative (QCBI) of the Policy Innovation Unit within DCYA.

By sharing the learnings arising from the many local good practices, the National Youth Health Programme will be better placed, not only to inform and advance further progress and innovation, but also to realise our shared goal of making Ireland a country in which all young people can experience positive health and wellbeing.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

THE NATIONAL YOUTH HEALTH PROGRAMME WILL:

1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
Ensure that policies and strategies – in terms of both their development and implementation – are informed by the needs and experiences of young people and the youth work organisations that support them	Inform and influence the development of national and local services that address youth health and wellbeing through the application of evidence acquired from our relationships and engagement with youth organisations	Highlight the work of quality health promoting youth work organisations who have achieved the Healthy Quality Mark ³	Promote the scaling up of approaches that are proven to produce successful, sustainable capacity building gains for youth organisations, youth services and youth workers	Capture and disseminate available evidence demonstrating the value and outcomes of key health promoting practices at individual and service level

02

STRATEGIC THEME 2:

Facilitate the wide scale application of national health policies and effective and sustainable health promoting practices within youth organisations.



WHY THIS STRATEGIC THEME IS IMPORTANT:

NYHP will represent the youth sector on a range of national working groups and committees responsible for creating national policies and strategies which impact the health and wellbeing of young people. Collaborative research and monitoring will also ensure that the National Youth Health Programme remains closely aligned to and supports the implementation of key national policies, such as:

- Healthy Ireland (2013)
- Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (2014)
- The National Youth Strategy 2015 - 2020 (2015)
- National Sexual Health Strategy (2015)
- Connecting for Life (2015)
- LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy (2018)
- A Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Plan and Action Plan (2016)
- Get Ireland Active: National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland

The extensive ecosystem of youth work organisations – rooted at both national and community level – provides a robust framework in which to pioneer and drive service innovation and improvement. To date, youth organisations have proven to be effective health promoting settings that adapt and implement national strategies and policies in their health related work with young people, particularly those who engage in the Health Quality Mark (HQM). In a time of significant growth in national health related policies and strategies, NYHP plays a pivotal role in supporting organisations to apply these developments within their services.

This includes:

- Evidence informed programmes which promote and inform healthy behaviours
- Specific issue based health promoting interventions supported by resource production and trainings
- Outcomes focused programmes in mental, emotional, physical, social, sexual and spiritual health which take account of “the 7 personal and social development outcomes”
- Health related policies that support youth organisations to address the health needs of their young people

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

THE NATIONAL YOUTH HEALTH PROGRAMME WILL:

2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5
Act as the hub for knowledge transfer, fostering and supporting networks and information exchange between youth organisations and policy makers	Promote national and international good practice	Support the application of quality health promoting capacity building interventions	Enhance the effectiveness of current health and wellbeing programme approaches adopted by youth work organisations by ensuring a focus on priority policy agendas	Represent and facilitate the health related interests and needs of the youth sector at a National and European level

OUR KEY STRATEGIC THEMES

03

STRATEGIC THEME 3:

Support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of effective, sustainable, evidence informed and evidence based programmes and interventions which are focussed on enhancing the health and wellbeing of young people across the youth sector.



WHY THIS STRATEGIC THEME IS IMPORTANT:

The NYHP will strive to ensure that the youth sector benefits from quality programmes and interventions that are effective, have positive impact and can be replicated. Furthermore, the NYHP will continuously monitor and evaluate our own work to assess impact on the youth sector. This focus on monitoring and evaluation will also extend to the sector to support organisations to demonstrate the impact of their work on young people's lives. As part of this element of our work, we will maintain a focus on demonstrating value for money.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

THE NATIONAL YOUTH HEALTH PROGRAMME WILL:

3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4
Identify the emerging health needs and priorities of young people, youth organisations, staff and volunteers	Continue to measure the impact of our work throughout the youth sector	Support youth organisations to monitor and evaluate health promoting programmes and interventions in order to identify quality youth health promotion which can be replicated within the youth sector. This enables youth organisations to make more informed decisions regarding resource allocation and thereby ensuring incremental impact and effectiveness	Utilise data from relevant national data and information hubs to inform planning and delivery of programmes, interventions and initiatives including 'An Indicator Set for Better Outcomes Brighter Future'

REFERENCES

1. 2016 census results indicate that the number of young people aged 10 to 24 will increase by 13.2% between 2015 and 2025 and will be just over one million young people by 2025 (1,005,938). E3003, Population 2011-2016 by Single Year of Age, Sex, County and City, CSO.
<https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=E3003&PLanguage=0>
2. Indecon Report Economic Assessment of Youth Work, 2011.
3. NYCI has developed the Health Quality Mark (HQ Mark) as a health promotion initiative with a view to enhancing best practice and a high standard of quality in all aspects of health promotion in youth organisations.

APPENDIX 1

Healthy Ireland (Department of Health, 2013) is the national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people of all ages living in Ireland. The framework sets out a commitment to support and link existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that aim to improve the decision-making capacity of children and young people through strengthening self-esteem, resilience, responses to social and interpersonal pressure, health and media literacy.



- 2.8:** Implement evidence based prevention and early intervention initiatives aimed at children and families, initially focusing on areas of disadvantage, drawing evidence emerging from the prevention and early intervention programme
- 2.13:** Combine mental health promotion programmes with interventions that address broader determinants and social problems as part of a multi-agency approach, particularly in areas with high levels of socio-economic deprivation and fragmentation
- 3.1:** Support and link existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that aim to improve the decision making capacity of children and young people through strengthening self-esteem, resilience, responses to social and interpersonal pressure, health and media literacy (including social media literacy)
- 3.4:** Support, link with and further improve existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that aim to improve the capacity of parents, carers and families to support healthier choices for their children and themselves
- 3.8:** Address and prioritise health literacy in developing future policy, educational and information interventions
- 3.9:** Strengthen participation in decision making for health and wellbeing at community level
- 4.8:** Ensure that community based programmes and projects are oriented to promote healthy behaviours and disease prevention to populations and communities at greatest risk
- 4.9:** Promote a skilled, diverse, cross-trained prevention workforce through training and continual professional development for primary care workers, health improvement and promotion staff, public health, educationalists (including those working in the early years sector) environmental health, health protection and staff in other sectors
- 6.9:** Examine models to support the provision of evaluation support and advice, particularly for smaller-scale initiatives and community development programmes

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures 2014-2020 (Department of Children and

Youth Affairs, 2014) the national policy framework for children and young people.

Outcome one, sets out aims that all children and young people are physically healthy and able to make positive healthy choices, have good mental health and have a positive and respectful approach to relationships and sexual health. Additionally, this framework prioritises the key transformational goals under each outcome area. In particular, the NYHP will take account of earlier intervention and prevention and ensuring quality services



- 1.4: Tackle inequalities in health outcomes for identified vulnerable groups including Travellers, Roma, refugee and asylum-seeking children, migrants, young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, those experiencing poverty, and children and young people who are the responsibility of the State, whether in care or detention
- 1.6: Continue to promote accessible and affordable youth and sports activities which encourage young people's overall personal and social development including healthy behaviours, and engage young people who might be at risk of early school-leaving or engaging in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour
- 1.7: Address the high rate of premature and risky alcohol consumption, use of illicit drugs and the incidence of smoking among young people
- 1.8: Support the implementation of a Vision for Change as it relates to children and young people
- 1.10: Combine mental health promotion programmes with interventions that address broader determinants and social problems as part of a multi-agency approach, particularly in areas with high levels of socio-economic deprivation and fragmentation
- 1.11: Support the implementation of the National Sexual Health Strategy ensuring access for young people to age appropriate information and services about relationships and sexual health
- 1.12: Support the implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan
- 1.14: Support and enable greater access to sports, arts and culture for all children and young people

COMMITMENTS UNDER TRANSFORMATION GOALS – CENTRAL TO OUTCOME 1

- Listen to and involve children and young people
- Strengthen participation in decision making for health and wellbeing at community level

The National Youth Strategy 2015 - 2020
(Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015)

sets out a priority action as outcome one, to support young people to enjoy a healthy lifestyle, in particular with regard to their physical, mental and sexual health and well-being.



- 1.1: Progress and support actions set out in the National Physical Activity Plan 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
- 1.3: Identify and support ways in which arts, culture, sports and youth organisations can cooperate at a local level to enhance quality and developmental opportunities for young people
- 1.4: Support the implementation of the National Obesity Policy and Action Plan which focuses on prevention, treatment and research
- 1.5: Support the implementation of Tobacco Free Ireland through the prioritisation of the protection of children and the de-normalisation of smoking
- 1.6: Support the implementation of actions set out in the National Sexual Health Strategy to ensure that young people living in Ireland will receive comprehensive and age appropriate sexual health education and information
- 1.8: Promote quality-assured, online youth mental health services among young people and within youth work and education settings
- 1.9: Promote programmes that address positive self-image and body confidence in formal and non-formal education settings
- 1.10: Support the implementation of Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020 as it relates to young people
- 1.11: Optimise the potential of youth services in promoting suicide prevention as part of those strategies and plans which focus on young people
- 1.12: Promote and support the implementation of technology, mental health and suicide prevention in Ireland: A good practice guide to ensure the safe and responsible delivery of online support services for young people

The **National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020** identifies that young people should receive comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education and/or information with appropriate prevention and promotion services.

- 3.4:** Continue to ensure and support all young people to acquire knowledge of how to access sources of trustworthy and accurate information and support on relationships and sexual health
- 3.5:** Support all children and young people in addressing issues that impact on sexual wellbeing such as stigma, homophobia, gender, ability/disability, mental health, alcohol and drugs
- 3.6:** Develop, support and promote accessible and appropriate information, resources and supports for parents to enable them to communicate effectively about relationships and sexuality
- 3.7:** Address the impact of early sexualisation and pornography and support parents, carers and others to address issues arising from early sexualisation
- 3.8:** Feed into the evaluation of state funded relationship and sexuality education programmes
- 3.9:** Continue to provide youth workers and those working with young people, appropriate training with the available resources to equip them to deliver relationship and sexuality education programmes
- 3.12:** Provide organisations working with young people both in and out of school settings with support and sexual health training to ensure they provide high quality advice, resources and services



Connecting for Life 2015-2020 identifies that young people who have mental health problems or those vulnerable to suicide, should be supported to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve their mental health which can be achieved through the provision and delivery of training and education programmes.



Connecting for Life

- 1.1:** Improve population-wide understanding of suicidal behaviours, mental health and wellbeing, and associated risk and protective factors
- 1.2:** Increase awareness of available suicide prevention and mental health services
- 1.3:** Reduce stigmatising attitudes to mental health and suicidal behaviours at population level within priority groups
- 2.1:** Improve and support the continuation of community level responses to suicide through planned, multi-agency approaches
- 2.2:** Ensure that accurate information and guidance on effective suicide prevention are provided for community-based organisations
- 2.3:** Ensure the provision and delivery of training and education programmes on suicide prevention to community-based organisations
- 3.1:** Improve and support the implementation of effective approaches to reducing suicidal behaviour among priority groups
- 3.2:** Support, in relation to suicide prevention, the Substance Misuse Strategy, to address the high rate of alcohol and drug misuse
- 3.3:** Enhance the supports for young people with mental health problems or those vulnerable to suicide

LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 sets out the goals and objectives for serving the needs of LGBTI+ people aged 10–24. The strategy aims to create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people, to improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people and develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people.



GOAL 1: CREATE A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE

1.3: Make all youth services more inclusive of LGBTI+ young people and provide accessible LGBTI+ youth services nationally

1.3. A: Ensure all youth services in receipt of public funding have a policy on the inclusion of LGBTI+ young people

1.5: Provide a more supportive and inclusive environment that encourages positive LGBTI+ representation and participation in culture, society and sport, and reduces LGBTI+ stigma

1.5. B: Support LGBTI+ young people to participate in sport

1.7: Provide capacity building measures among service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with, LGBTI+ young people

1.7. A: Implement evidence based LGBTI+ training, CPD initiatives and guidelines targeted at professional service providers and youth services including school completion programme, FRC's, youth services and youth helpline personnel

1.9: Address fragmentation in funding and support networking of organisations to work collaboratively

1.9. A: Ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of effective LGBTI+ services and funding of services for young people through inter-agency cooperation

GOAL 2: IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SEXUAL HEALTH OF LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE

2.12: Strengthen sexual health services and education to respond to the needs of LGBTI+ young people, including in the area of sexual consent

2.12. D: Ensure that the education and information made available relating to sexual consent, sexual consent and coercion, and sexual violence, includes LGBTI+ experiences and provides LGBTI+ specific education and awareness, including but not limited to men who have sex with men

A Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025 strives to empower young people and their communities to enhance their own skills to improve their health. The policy and action plan illustrate the 'Ten Steps Forward' framework that will lead out on reversing the obesity trends in Ireland.

STEP 1: Embed multi-sectoral actions on obesity prevention with the support of government departments and public sector agencies

1.2: Develop and implement an integrated and holistic health and wellbeing model for the youth work sector



STEP 8: Acknowledge the key role of physical activity in the prevention of overweight and obesity

8.1: Implement the national physical activity plan for Ireland

STEP 9: Allocate resources according to need, in particular to those population groups most in need of support in the prevention and management of obesity, with particular emphasis on families and children during the first 1,000 days of life

9.2: Scale up effective community based programmes with a focus on disadvantaged areas to enhance knowledge and skills with regard to healthy eating and active living

Get Ireland Active: National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland identifies that children and young people learn the necessary skills for confident engagement with physical activity and will have opportunities to adopt an active way of life.

ACTION AREA 1: PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Ref 4: Identify and promote existing evidence based best practice policy, programmes, initiatives and infrastructure that are promoting increased levels of physical activity

Ref 7: Raise awareness among the youth work sector of opportunities to educate through physical activity



ACTION AREA 2: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Ref 13: Develop and provide a programme of continuous professional development in physical education

ACTION AREA 6: SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE COMMUNITY

Ref 47: Continue to support the work of the National Governing Bodies of sport in implementing programmes to promote physical activity

ACTION AREA 7: RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Ref 52: Establish a research programme to inform policies aimed at improving physical activity levels in each of the target groups (youth)

ACTION AREA 8: IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Ref 57: Identify existing resources across all sectors that support physical activity

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S) are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognise that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. SDG's ensure healthy lives and promotes wellbeing at all ages.



GOAL 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL BEING

- 3.4:** By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
- 3.7:** By 2030, ensure universal access to information and education on sexual health and sexual health promotion
- 3a:** Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate
- 3d:** Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks



National Youth Council of Ireland
3 Montague Street
Dublin 2
Ireland
D02 V327

info@nyci.ie
+353 (0) 1 478 4122
www.youth.ie