

Setting up an Advisory Group of Young People for Consultations on the Review of the Garda Youth Diversion Programme

What are Advisory Groups of Children or Young People?

- Advisory groups provide a way of directly involving a small number of children and young people (up to ten) in advising on the development of a consultation, programme, project, plan or service. Working with an advisory group is a particularly valuable way to plan and pilot a consultation with broader cohort of children or young people.
- Advisory groups are also a very useful way of ensuring the direct involvement of children and young people in decision-making in situations where it is not possible to involve all children or young people in a school, organisation, service or programme.
- Advisory groups of children and young people work best when they have a clear and specific remit.

Advisory Group for Consultations on the Garda Youth Diversion Programme:

- During 2018, the Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) was engaged in a consultative change process in reviewing the national Garda Youth Diversion Programme. The IYJS approached the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Participation Unit to collaborate in getting the views of young people as part of this consultative process. DCYA asked Hub na nÓg to lead on developing and conducting consultations with young people.
- Hub na nÓg proposed consultations with young people involved in Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs) to discover what works well and what does not work well in GYDPs.

The Hub:

- Established an Advisory Group of six young people from GYDPs from around the country who worked with the Hub team in developing the consultation methodology and supporting the consultation process conducted seven consultations with forty young people from GYDPs nationwide.

The Advisory Group met five times over the six-month timeframe of the consultation process. The group engaged in the following activities:

- Piloted the draft consultation methodology that was developed by the Hub Team.
- Worked with the Hub Team on refining and improving the consultation methodology.
- Advised on the best approach to recruiting other young people for the consultations.
- Attended (in pairs) at the consultations and explained the process to other young people in a youth-friendly way.
- Five members of the Advisory Group spoke about their involvement in the advisory group and the consultations at the first National Irish Youth Justice Conference in November 2018, attended by over 300 policy-makers, Gardaí, youth justice workers and other stakeholders. Their participation in the conference was supported and facilitated by the Hub team.
- Worked with the Hub team to develop a youth version of the report of the consultations. The members of the advisory group suggested the development of an activity pack for young people in GYDPs to be used by youth justice workers in the projects. The activity pack outlines the key findings from the consultations on A4 and A3 posters and provides space for

young people in GYDPs to add their own ideas. Copies of the activity pack were sent to all GYDP projects in the country.

GYPD Activity Pack:



Some quotes from the members of the Advisory Group about their involvement:

- “The advisory gave me a chance to meet sound culchies”
- “Gave me lovely food...with jalapeños”
- “Gave back info to leaders, so they get a better insight into what is working and not working”
- “We came up with different methods that would work the best in the consultations”
- “I realised how lucky I am for the facilities I have in my project”