



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



YOUNG VOICES
IN DECISION MAKING

Participation of Children and Young People in Decision-making



Youth-friendly
**ACTION
PLAN**
2024-2028



Introduction

The Action Plan is the second plan from the Irish Government to support children and young people's participation in decision-making. It follows up on the Government's promise to realise the right of children and young people to have a voice on decisions that affect their lives.

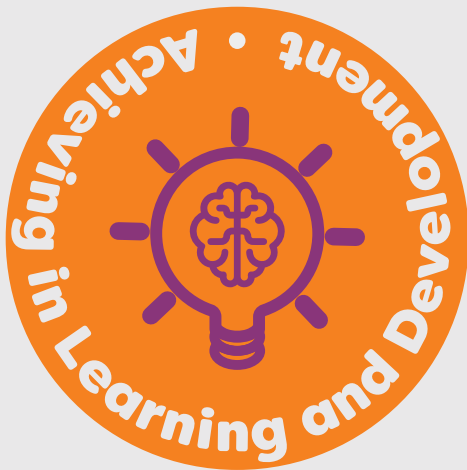
The Action plan focuses on children and young people under the age of 18, but it also includes everybody up to the age of 24. This is because of children and young people's right to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) explains children and young people's participation in decision-making as conversations between children and adults. This includes children learning how their views have been taken into account and shaped the outcome.

This Action Plan helps the Irish Government to have conversations with children and young people, which will highlight the voice of children and young people in decision-making.

This means that children and young people are involved in decision-making in everyday settings such as at home, in classrooms, in childcare settings, in healthcare and in National Policy decisions that affect their lives.

The Action Plan supports Ireland's goal to help make sure children and young people are:



This Action Plan will help make sure children and young people can share their views and opinions on decisions that affect their lives. It continues to support children and young people's voice on things like their health, transport and wellbeing and their communities.

There are also some new plans to help involve children and young people in decisions at home, in court, in care settings, and advice on how to support children and young people with disabilities.

For this plan to work, we need the views of children and young people. This will result in children and young people's ideas being used in rules, resources, laws and research. The DCEDIY will make sure this plan is put in place, with regular progress updates and actions.

Children, young people and parents gave their opinions in public feedback sessions.



How was the Action Plan created?

The Action Plan was created by reviewing the last plan (2015-2020), gathering public feedback, talking to children and young people directly and looking at recent public feedback sessions (these are also called consultations).

Children and young people shared what worked, like more policies and laws that support participation, more youth organisations that focused on participation were formed and more awareness of their rights. The children and young people also thought about what hasn't worked, like a lack of awareness of how to get involved and not all children and young people were represented.

598 parents
and 166 children
and young people
gave their opinion in
the public feedback
sessions

93% of the goals
from the last plan
were completed or in
progress, so this Action
Plan expands on the
last plan and makes
it better.

DCEDIY-funded structures

The DCEDIY supports lots of structures to help children and young people be involved in making decisions that affect your lives. Some examples:

- 1 Hub na nÓg (Young Voices in Decision-Making):** An organisation across Ireland that supports children and young people to have a say in decisions impacting them, especially those who may not have the same chances to be heard as often.
- 2 National Framework:** A structure that helps adults listen to children and young people and gives them a voice in decision-making.
- 3 National Participation Office** runs programmes like **Comhairle na nÓg** (local youth councils), **Dáil na nÓg** (youth parliament), and the **National Youth Assembly**.
- 4 Comhairle na nÓg** is a collection of local youth councils in each of the 31 local authorities. These youth councils give a voice in decision-making for young people aged 12-18 years. Comhairle na nÓg also provides young people with a voice in decision-making nationally.
- 5 Dáil na nÓg and Comhairle na nÓg National Executive:** Dáil na nÓg is the national youth parliament and is held every two years, and helps decide on the focus of the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive.
The Comhairle na nÓg National Executive is made up of 31 young people, one chosen from each local Comhairle na nÓg who work on the main issues chosen at Dáil na nÓg. The DCEDIY supports the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive by making sure that the views of the children and young people are reflected properly in government decision-making.
- 6 Seanad na nÓg** is the youth senate, where young people debate topics in the Seanad Chamber and ask the Seanad to consider these debates.
- 7 Comhairle na nÓg Showcase** brings together up to 500 young people to represent their Comhairle's work, and let them connect with each other and meet decision-makers.

