Delegate Report
Dáil na nÓg 2017
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Dáil na nÓg 2017

Dáil na nÓg, the National Youth Parliament of Ireland, took place in Croke Park in Dublin on the 6th December 2017. 212 delegates from all 31 Comhairlí na nÓg around the country participated at the event. Dáil na nÓg is funded and overseen by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and organised by the Participation Team from Foróige & Youth Work Ireland.

Dáil na nÓg 2017 was formally launched by Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone.

The theme for Dáil na nÓg 2017 was: ‘Equality: in all fairness...’

- On the day, delegates had the opportunity to participate in workshop discussions on this theme.
- This was followed by a Questions & Answers session with a panel of experts relevant to the topic under discussion. You can read more about the panel members and their backgrounds on pages 10 and 11.
- David Stanton, T.D., Minister of State for Equality, Immigration & Integration was one of the panel members who participated in the Q&A. He also gave an impassioned address to the delegates stating that ‘we can’t take equality for granted’

‘People can achieve when given the opportunity’

- The delegates also heard from two members of the outgoing Comhairle na nÓg National Executive who spoke about their education topic and its culmination in the ‘So, how was school today? survey report. They also introduced the DVD from the survey report launch.
Opening Ceremony

Dáil na nÓg 2017 started quite literally with a bang at 10:35 with a fantastic group of drummers who lead the delegates to the opening ceremony in the Hogan Suite.

Dáil na nÓg 2017 was chaired by:

Luke Casserly
Longford Comhairle na nÓg National Executive, 2016-17

Megan Skinnader
Donegal Comhairle na nÓg National Executive 2016-17

Megan and Luke introduced all of the speakers for the day, two of whom were their fellow National Executive members Aoibhinn Callaghan from Leitrim and Emily Bollard from Westmeath. Aoibhinn and Emily spoke about their experience of being on the National Executive and about their work on the recommendation from Dáil na nÓg 2015 on the topic of education and ‘what happens in the classroom.

This resulted in the So, how was school today? survey, the report of which was launched on 6th November. Dáil na nÓg delegates were then treated to the first viewing of the launch video which is available for viewing on the link below:

https://www.comhairlenanog.ie/national-executive/2016-17/launch-of-so-how-was-school-today-survey-report/
Opening Address by Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

Dr Katherine Zappone TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, officially opened Dáil na nÓg and addressed the delegates with the following words: “Comhairle na nÓg is a great success story and is growing from strength to strength every year… You are coming up with solutions that only young people themselves could dream of. Your energy, enthusiasm and commitment are infectious and I always immensely enjoy meeting young Comhairle members”

The Minister praised the youth-led approach to the day saying “I think it’s important to highlight the fact that this is the first year that young people themselves will be facilitating the table discussions for Dáil na nÓg” exclaiming “THIS IS HOW IT SHOULD BE!”

She finished up with some very positive news for Comhairle members, and in particular for members of the incoming National Executive… “I am pleased to announce that we have fulfilled our commitment in ensuring that whatever Department is responsible for the topic under discussion at sessions of Dáil na nÓg, they will have their Minister in attendance and will support the work of the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive”.

Minister Zappone with members of Limerick Comhairle na nÓg, three of whom were part of the Dáil na nÓg Steering Committee and were involved in the planning and decision-making process of the event from the very beginning
Workshop Discussions:

The theme for Dáil na nÓg 2017 was ‘Equality: in all fairness...’ This was the majority vote by 325 Comhairle members from 21 Comhairlí from all over the country on the four proposed themes - the others were Young People and Civic Engagement, Healthy Lifestyle and Transport, in 2nd, 3rd and 4th places respectively.

Delegates at Dáil na nÓg were asked to discuss this theme at 21 round tables, including an Irish-speaking table, under the following five settings: School, Home / Community, Online, Public Services and Sport / Leisure. Each discussion group was facilitated by young people from the outgoing Comhairle na nÓg National Executive and members of the Dáil na nÓg Steering Committee. The discussions were co-facilitated by an accompanying adult.

"The workshops were the best. Facilitator was very friendly and I really enjoyed meeting new people”

- School
- Home / community
- Online
- Public Services
- Sport / leisure

♦ Each delegate had the opportunity to discuss each of the five areas, spending 20 minutes on the first setting.
♦ Table-sized placemats were used to discuss and write ideas on the topics at each table.
♦ After twenty minutes discussing the first setting in detail, delegates then moved on the next setting at a different table for 10 minutes, moving four times in total.
♦ At each new table, delegates had the opportunity to read what the previous group had written, and to add any new points they considered important.
Workshop Discussions:

- Each table had a large colourful placemat for delegates to write or illustrate their ideas upon.
- Each placemat had three questions:
  - Q1: What are the equality issues in this place?
  - Q2: What needs to be done to improve equality in this place?
- After lunch, delegates returned to their original table to vote by sticky-dot on Question 2 - what needs to be done to improve equality in this place? They received three sticky dots to prioritise what they thought were the top three suggestions in relation to this question.
- This information was really important as it is being included in the official report from the workshop sessions, which in turn is being used to inform the work-plan for the new National Executive 2018-19. For more information on this, see pages 12-13.

The best thing about the day was “the passion the facilitators had for the topic”
After lunch, all 212 delegates had the opportunity to vote on the equality setting they felt was most important out of the five. The vote took place by private ballot. This topic will form the basis of the work-plan for the newly elected National Executive 2018-19.

The winning setting was:
‘Equality in School’

The results of the vote were announced by chairpersons Megan and Luke at 14:50.
Questions and Answers session: 3pm

The Questions & Answers (Q&A) session offered delegates the opportunity to ask questions of a number of relevant experts from government and those working in the field of equality.

Each table came up with one question to pose to the panel — 21 questions in total were answered.
Meet the 2017 panel

David Stanton, T.D., Minister of State for Equality, Immigration & Integration

- First elected to Dáil Éireann representing Cork East in 1997
- Chairperson of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality in previous Oireachtas
- Member of the All-Party Sub-Committee on Dáil Reform

Dr Carol Baxter, Assistant Secretary General and Head of Asylum Services, Equality and Integration at the Department of Justice and Equality

- Responsible for the implementation of policy on gender, equality, integration and refugee services.
- 2013-16: Principal Officer in the Civil Law Reform Division of the Department of Justice and Equality working on legislation concerning the Marriage Equality referendum
- Previously was Head of Development at the Equality Authority supporting a wide range of public and private sector organisations to incorporate equality into their organisational structures and processes.
Dr Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children in Ireland

- Ireland’s second Ombudsman for Children—appointed 2015
- Ombudsman for Children’s Office (OCO) deals with complaints by, or on behalf of, young people about public bodies such as the Health Service Executive, Tusla, schools, voluntary hospitals and the children’s detention centre.
- Registered Counselling and Clinical Psychologist who has worked in the area of Child Protection for almost 20 years

Tanya Ward, CEO, Children’s Rights Alliance

- Chief Executive of the Children’s Rights Alliance since 2012
- Children’s Rights Alliance’s representative on the National Advisory Council for the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People.
- Board member of the Law Centre for Children and Young People Board, a member of the Planning Group of the Prevention and Early Intervention Network and a member Oversight Board for the Childcare Law Reporting Project.

Dr Fergal Lynch, Secretary General, Department of Children and Youth Affairs

- Appointed Secretary General of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in January 2015
- Has overseen initiatives relating to expansion of child care schemes, youth policy and youth justice issues.
- Worked for over 30 years in the Department of Health, serving there as Deputy Secretary General there from 2012 to 2015
Dail na nÓg 2017
What happens next?

A report of the workshop discussions at Dáil na nÓg 2017 provides an analysis of all the material from the 21 placemats from the workshop sessions under the five settings: School, Home / Community, Online, Public Services and Sport / Leisure.

This report is available on the Dáil na nÓg page of the website.

The setting which received the most votes, School, will provide the work-plan for the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive 2018-19. They will be looking at all the equality and inequality issues experienced by young people in this setting. The Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA) ensure that the young people elected to the National Executive get the opportunity to engage with appropriate Ministers, policy-makers, Oireachtas Committees and other statutory and non-statutory decision-makers throughout their term.

Key equality issues in school:
The key equality issues in a school setting which emerged from analysis of the placemats are as follows (listed in order of priority, as voted by the delegates):

- Unequal treatment of students by teachers
- School uniform and appearance issues
- Gender inequality in subject choices
- LGBTI equality issues
- Issues related to curriculum
- Religious equality issues
- Irish language equality issues

“The workshop gave me and the others the chance to have our say on the topic”
The task for the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive 2018-19

The National Executive will be supported by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and other relevant government departments to implement changes recommended by the young people at the workshop discussions at Dáil na nÓg.

When asked ‘What needs to be done to improve equality in this place?’, delegates at Dáil na nÓg made the following suggestions & comments (a sample from each of the five settings):

- “Students should have a voice in the classroom and more freedom to express themselves without getting in trouble”
- “All subjects should be available to all students in all schools”
- “More gender-fluid uniforms”
- “Allow for students’ individuality, diversity and difference”
- “Rules not being enforced equally... trying to stand up for yourself... it will be taken as talking back.”
- “Sex education in schools should be inclusive of all sexual orientations”
- “different subject standards between boys and girls schools, e.g. girls schools having no metal work and boys schools not having home economics”
Meet the new National Executive 2018-19

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlow:</td>
<td>Rhys Scully</td>
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<td>Cavan:</td>
<td>Cormac Brady</td>
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<td>Clare:</td>
<td>Shane Quinn</td>
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<td>Cork City:</td>
<td>Jiang O’Neill</td>
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<td>Cork County:</td>
<td>Alicia O'Sullivan</td>
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<td>Donegal:</td>
<td>Daire Harper</td>
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<td>Dublin City:</td>
<td>Anthony Khijinski</td>
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<td>Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown:</td>
<td>Ross Beatty</td>
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<td>Fingal:</td>
<td>Luana Romila</td>
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<td>Galway City:</td>
<td>Jacub Kostanki</td>
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<td>Galway County:</td>
<td>Cian Mullins</td>
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<td>Kerry:</td>
<td>Snejana Herbst</td>
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<td>Kildare:</td>
<td>Aaron Hackett</td>
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<td>Dylan Gordon</td>
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<td>Laois:</td>
<td>Cian MacGearaillt</td>
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<td>Leitrim:</td>
<td>Scot Ferns</td>
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<td>Limerick:</td>
<td>Gillian Hickey</td>
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<td>Longford:</td>
<td>Alex Gorman</td>
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<td>Louth:</td>
<td>Joshua Challoner</td>
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<td>Mayo:</td>
<td>Aoibhe Hopkins</td>
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<td>Meath:</td>
<td>Laura McInerney</td>
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<td>Monaghan:</td>
<td>Oisín Ó Faogáin</td>
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<td>Offaly:</td>
<td>Cian Egan</td>
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<td>Roscommon:</td>
<td>Michael Lough</td>
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<td>Sligo:</td>
<td>Adam Walsh</td>
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<td>South Dublin:</td>
<td>Rachel Brennan</td>
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<td>Tipperary:</td>
<td>Anna Powell</td>
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<td>Waterford:</td>
<td>Tammy Whelan</td>
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<td>Westmeath:</td>
<td>Caolfhinn Ní Choilligh</td>
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<td>Wexford:</td>
<td>Cassie Baker</td>
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<td>Wicklow:</td>
<td>Jennifer Woods</td>
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Evaluation of Dáil na nÓg 2017

Of the 212 young people participating at Dáil na nÓg 2017, 205 evaluations were collected. Below are the results of the evaluation, based on a Scale of 1-4.

The whole event

- Not good: 0.00%
- Okay: 3.92%
- Very Good: 40.69%
- Excellent: 55.39%

Dáil na nÓg Delegate Guide 2017

- Not good: 0.00%
- Okay: 10.24%
- Very Good: 52.20%
- Excellent: 33.66%

Opening Ceremony

- Not good: 3.90%
- Okay: 12.25%
- Very Good: 42.16%
- Excellent: 44.12%
- Did not receive a Dáil na nÓg Guide: 0.00%
The workshop session

- Not good: 0.49%
- Okay: 8.29%
- Very Good: 44.88%
- Excellent: 46.34%

Voting on the five settings

- Not good: 0.50%
- Okay: 10.89%
- Very Good: 44.06%
- Excellent: 44.55%

Developing question for Q&A

- Not good: 2.97%
- Okay: 20.30%
- Very Good: 47.52%
- Excellent: 29.21%
Do you feel you had the opportunity to have your say on the theme 'Equality'? 

- Yes: 98%
- No: 2%

Did the facilitator in your group allow everyone to have their say? 

- Yes: 97.50%
- No: 2.50%
What the delegates liked about Dáil na nÓg 2017

“I loved everything about it. It was an amazing day”

“Meeting new people & having a say”

“I enjoyed being able to have my say about the topics and knowing that it would make a difference”

“Getting together with loads of other young people & meeting the minister”

‘The picture props and the selfie mirror’

‘Katherine Zappone’

‘The MCs’

‘Having an opportunity to have our voices heard by experts’
Dail na nÓg 2017 pics by Comhairle