

What Is Comhairle na nÓg?

The Comhairle (youth councils) are organised by the City/County Development Boards in each local area. In South Tipperary the youth council is supported by the regional youth services jointly. The council's objective is to give children and young people a voice at a community level. Comhairle na nÓg (youth councils) were established in 2002 as part of the National Children's Strategy (2000). Each year at the Annual Comhairle Day, Delegates are elected to be the Youth Council (**Comhairle na nÓg**) for the County for the coming year.

At the Annual Comhairle Day there will be a programme of events which will include discussing the following plus two subjects to be decided upon by the Office of the Minister for Children. There will be capacity building sessions on the day, along with facilitators and rapporteurs who will encourage and assist all delegates to have their say.

There will also be an election on the day to elect the 20 Members of the Comhairle na nÓg for 2009-2010 Youth council in South Tipperary. All delegates on the day will be eligible to go forward for this election. They will join 6 delegates from last year and will have a term of office until the following October.

The 26 member Comhairle will elect 5 Delegates to Dáil na nÓg (www.dailnanog.ie). from the 26 Members of the elected Youth Council (Comhairle na nÓg)

The Annual Comhairle Day in itself is a very worthwhile and educational day for any young person. Attendees will learn about the democratic process, the different levels of political representation in Ireland.

Elected on to the Comhairle na nÓg or the Dáil na nÓg is an invaluable experience for young people. Their education about the political system in Ireland will be extensive, their self confidence will increase, their public speaking abilities will be encouraged and augmented, it will be a very useful addition to their CVs and of course the kudos for delegates from Schools or youth organisation of being represented on either the Comhairle na nÓg or the Dáil na nÓg will be excellent.

Comhairle na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg are recognised as the official structures for participation by children and young people in the development of policies and services.

Throughout the country Comhairle na nÓg are:

- Developing links with other Comhairle na nÓg, policy makers, student councils, youth organisations and other groups;
- Ensuring the involvement of hard-to-reach children and young people;
- Focusing on exchanging best practice in running Youth Councils (Comhairle na nÓg) in a democratic, accountable and transparent manner.

Comhairle na nÓg are overseen and part-funded by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) (www.omc.gov.ie). The OMCYA has the lead role in ensuring that children and young people in Ireland have a voice on issues that affect their lives.

Many local authorities around the country are doing fantastic work with Comhairle na nÓg and involving children and young people in projects such as:

- the way future recreation facilities and youth cafes will be developed and managed;
- the development of playgrounds;
- encouraging active citizenship;

What Is Dáil na nÓg?

Dáil na nÓg means "youth parliament".

It is an annual event where the children and young people of Ireland meet on a national level to discuss issues that are important to them.

The Dáil na nÓg delegates have the chance to let the decision makers in Government know what they think of issues that affect their daily lives, for example road safety and play facilities.

NYCI organise Dáil na nÓg in partnership with Foróige and Youth Work Ireland on behalf of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. In each county the delegates who attend Dail na Nog are chosen from the county Comhairle or youth council usually on the day of the Comhairle County event by election of their peers.

What Is The Dáil na nÓg Council?

'It is important to realise that Dáil na nÓg is not just a one day event.'

The ideas and recommendations that the Delegates come up with on the day will be followed up by a democratically elected group called the the Dáil na nÓg Council. The Dáil na nÓg Council work throughout the year to drive forward the ideas and recommendations that were agreed on at Dáil na nÓg. One member of each delegation in each county will go forward to this council for the year ahead. This means that there will be 34 members on the Dáil na nÓg Council.

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and other government officials will be at Dáil na nÓg but it is important to have a group of committed young people to make sure that your ideas are heard.

The main function of the Dáil na nÓg Council is to:

- Give young people the chance to follow up on what was agreed by delegates at Dáil na nÓg.
- To meet and present the outcomes of Dáil na nÓg to Ministers, T.Ds, government officials and representatives of the Taoiseach's office.
- To represent Dáil na nÓg at relevant conferences
- To report back developments from National (Coiste) to Local Level (Comhairle)

The objectives of the Dáil are to:

- Provide a place where children, who are representative of the average Irish Child, can raise and debate issues of concern to them;
- Act as a tool for children's concerns to be fed into the development of public policy making;
- Provide a model for children's participation which can be developed at local level with links to the national Dáil;
- Support civic, social and personal development in children;
- Provide a centre for children to hear and learn about the experiences of other children growing up in Ireland.