

# NI Youth Forum

Since 1979

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# Policy Context

- The Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work in Northern Ireland (2005-2008) has brought participation to the forefront in youth work as one of four strategic themes.

*Aim 2 of the strategy sets out to “ensure that young people have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to make informed choices about their lives, are at the heart of designing, managing and evaluating youth work policy and practice, have opportunities to address issues they are interested in, and can make a meaningful contribution within their communities and within public and political decision making processes”.*

- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act - 1998

# Children & Young Peoples 10 Year Strategy

- *The inclusion of the following pledge in the Children and Young People's Strategy (Northern Ireland) has brought the interest in participation into an even wider arena. "In accordance with the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, we will be proactive in obtaining the views of children on matters of significance to them". In addition, the strategy states "For the life of the strategy and beyond, we will, therefore, ensure that children and young people are routinely involved in the public decision-making process".*



# Policy cont.....

- *The United Kingdom ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1991. Article 12 emphasises young people's rights to have a say in decisions that affect their lives.*
- *The principal aim of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) is described in the legislation as "to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young persons".*

# Youth Forum's Work

- The NIYF is a youth led organisation that lobbies, advocates, promotes and fights for the rights of young people in NI. We aim to build the confidence and awareness of all young people so that they can assert their rights.
- Research and consultation.
- Training with organisations, young people and staff. (the Big Deal Team)
- Campaigns and events
- Democracy work
- Community change programmes
- Cross Border and UK wide links.

# Why involve young people?

- To work towards a more inclusive society
- Client led services
- Empowering young people and giving them a voice
- Where it has been done it has been both beneficial for young people and public authorities / organisations
- More creative and relevant services
- Allows more detached young people an opportunity to develop skills and develop community interventions and services



# The Way Forward!

- The Network for Youth
- Making It Happen
- Shadow Councils & Continued development of youth led groups
- Strong research and proactive consultation
- Development of youth led campaigns