

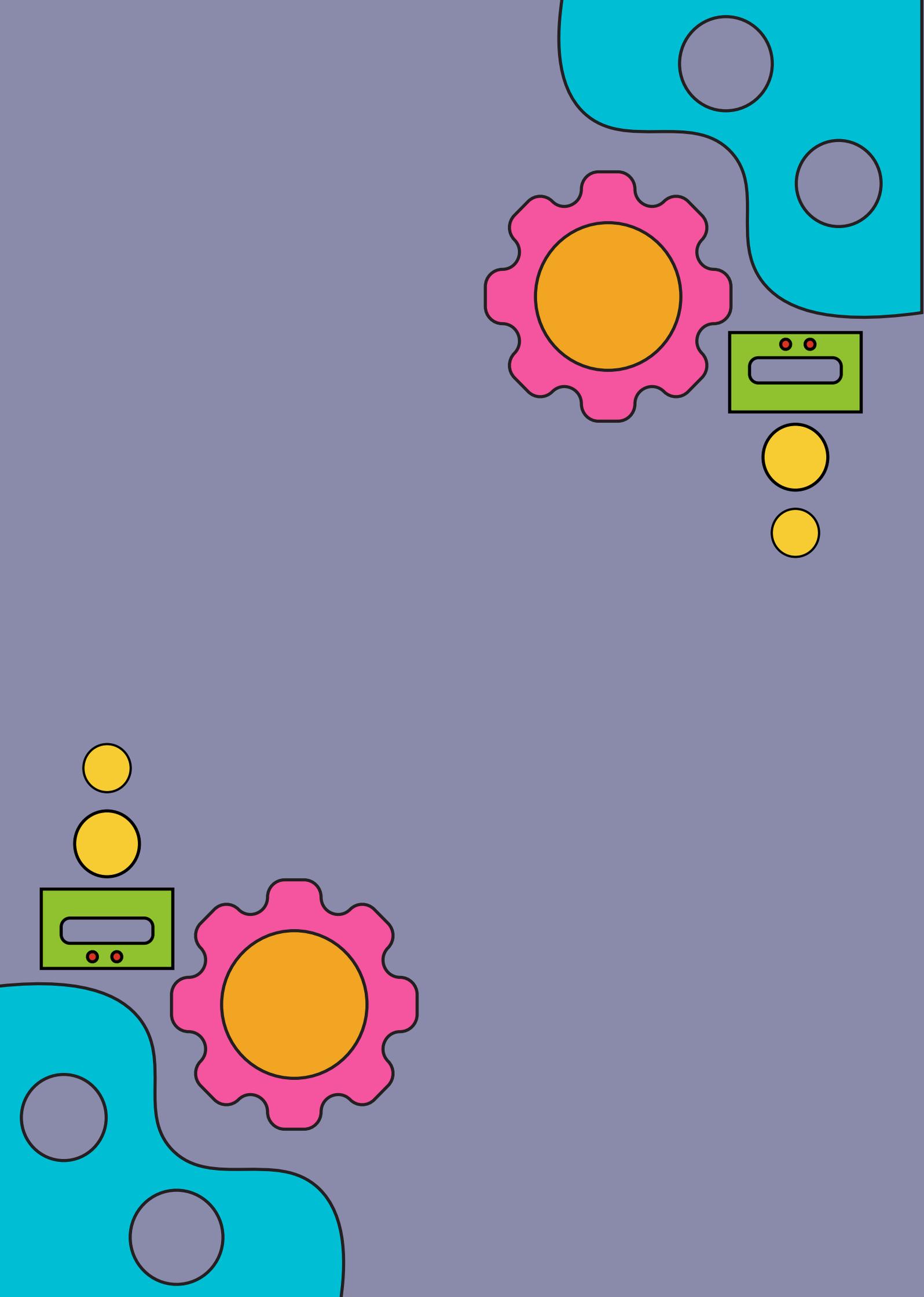


Youth Work Ireland

YOUTH WORK IRELAND

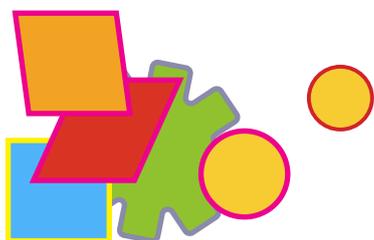
**IMPACTING YOUNG LIVES,
TOGETHER**

STRATEGIC STATEMENT 2022-2027



Contents

Introduction by Chairperson	2
Foreword by CEO	3
About Youth Work Ireland	4
Our Purpose	5
Our Work In Support of Policy	7
Our Vision	7
Our Mission	7
Our Values	8
Our Strategic Pillars 2022-2027	9
Strategic Pillar One: Communication	10
Strategic Pillar Two: Advocacy	11
Strategic Pillar Three: Support	12
Strategic Pillar Four: Impact	13
Appendix One – Consultation Process	14
Appendix Two – Policies and Government Priorities of Relevance to our Work	16



Introduction by Chairperson

Developing the Strategic Statement has been a very dynamic and rewarding process for Youth Work Ireland and we are looking forward with ambition to the next five years. However, we are still living in the shadow of the COVID pandemic, which has had such a dramatic effect on the lives of young people.

In these volatile times, Youth Work Ireland has the advantage of many decades of supporting young people through our Member Youth Services. This nationwide network, the largest youth organisation in the country, has on a consistent basis responded to emerging needs, managed change and most importantly ensured that the young person is central to all our considerations.

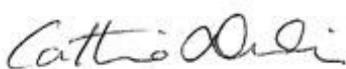
What has emerged as pivotal from this process is our role as a National Office in service to our Member Youth Services. From this standpoint, the intermediary role of Youth Work Ireland is of central importance. We are advocates for young people and disseminate good practice from the local but with the intention and potential to influence at both national and European level.

We propagate the unique value of our integrated youth work model, which is needs-based and holistic. Crucially, we can source additional funding and resources for our members, pilot innovative programmes and be in the vanguard with our members in the development of new programmes and approaches. This new and exciting stage of our development is to be welcomed and embraced.

I wish to thank all those who made such a positive contribution to the process with their time, their thoughts, their energy and their commitment. This includes the young people who participated in surveys and workshops, our Member Youth Services and in particular the Regional Directors, external agencies, partners, staff members and the National Board. A special word of thanks to the Strategic Planning Sub-group which included Board and staff members and which led the process from the beginning.

Finally, I want to thank our consultants Anne Eustace and Marie Cleary who skilfully guided us all through the process. I look forward to working with you all in the coming years in ensuring we deliver on this Strategic Statement.

Thank you,



Catherine Durkin

Chair, Board of Youth Work Ireland

Foreword by CEO

We are pleased to present our Strategic Statement 2022-2027

One would be forgiven for thinking that the only constant in our lives these days is change. If the world-wide pandemic has taught us anything, it is that not a lot in this life is constant, guaranteed or secured. We have learned that we are all capable of innovation and sometimes even radical change in order to achieve our objectives and be faithful to the values that underpin them. This Strategic Statement sets Youth Work Ireland on a new and exciting journey which supports and accompanies our Member Youth Services as they respond to the needs of young people in this constantly changing world.

The ever-shifting landscape which has become a characteristic of the youth work sector means that Youth Work Ireland's strategy and structure must constantly evolve in order to best respond to the needs of our Member Youth Services. During the implementation of this Strategy, Youth Work Ireland will demonstrate flexibility by committing to respond to the diverse needs of our diverse Member Youth Services. We will work to improve our communication by continuing to listen to our Member Youth Services, communicate our work to them and seek their constant guidance. We will also communicate the impact of our work to policy makers and the public.

During the next five years Youth Work Ireland will become a greener and more sustainable organisation and will follow and support young people's lead on the promotion of a just transition to a more sustainable world. We will work to strengthen the voice of our Member Youth Services. We will continue to create spaces for young people to have a voice in the decision making which impacts on their lives.

The Board and staff of Youth Work Ireland will strive to promote a culture of continuous improvement by continuing to work to improve all aspects of our work from service delivery, programme development, to reporting, evaluating and evidencing impacts. This Strategic Statement repositions volunteers and volunteering at the heart of the organisation and implements new ways to support and encourage their amazing contribution to our clubs and projects. We will work with our Member Youth Services to promote international youth work and the mobility of young people.

How we structure our organisation is vital to success. Together we pledge to promote, strengthen and celebrate the federal nature of our organisation. Our structures will be characterised by openness, transparency, accountability, inclusivity and participation. The National Office will support, promote and attain excellence in governance and compliance. We will practice prudence in the use of the resources allocated to our work in an efficient, effective and cost-effective manner.

Together we will be better, do better and be the change makers to achieve our shared vision and mission.



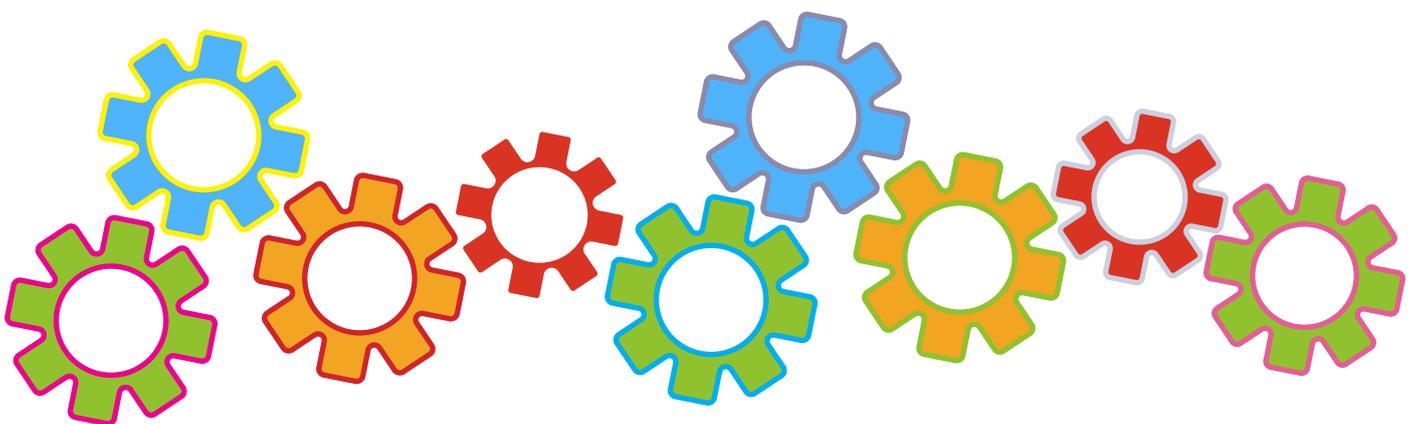
Dr Patrick J. Burke
CEO Youth Work Ireland

About Youth Work Ireland

Youth Work Ireland CLG is a national network of 20 independent, autonomous Member Youth Services. The structure of the federation allows for a local, regional, national and European perspective to underpin, inform and progress best practice youth work. The federation facilitates the voices of young people to be heard and issues raised to be explored and progressed.

Youth Work Ireland is a registered charity and is the organisation that supports the work of the federation of the 20 Member Youth Services. Through our National Office we work with and support the Member Youth Services located around Ireland to deliver services to meet the needs of young people in their locations.

These services fit under our integrated youth services model and include youth clubs, music programmes, sexual health awareness, environmental actions, advocacy campaigns, substance misuse programmes, mental health supports, youth information centres and one-to-one work. We form and nurture strategic partnerships to advance local delivery on national priorities.



Our Purpose

Our purpose, at Youth Work Ireland, is to **lead** out and **support** our Member Youth Services, located throughout Ireland and indirectly to support young people through best practice youth work **principles** and **values**.

We are an **inclusive** and **member-centred** organisation. Our work is in service to our Member Youth Services, as they in turn work to develop the **potential** of young people and to **strengthen** communities in Ireland through **quality** youth work practices and delivery.



Young people are at the heart of our work and are best supported through good leadership and excellent standards in service delivery, volunteering, staff and services throughout the Member Youth Services.

Our job, in accordance with our Constitution and Membership Charter¹ is to support and work with Member Youth Services by:

- Working in collaboration to progress quality youth work.
- Advocating to inform public policy in relation to youth work and youth services.
- Being the national voice representing our Member Youth Services.
- Showcasing the work of our Member Youth Services at a national and European Level.
- Designing and co-designing best practice programmes and agreed shared positions informed by local experience and robust research and elevating this learning to national levels.
- Collating, networking and sharing up-to-the-minute information about policy, funding and best practice youth work.
- Delivering training, development and networking opportunities for our Member Youth Services.
- Organising national events and programmes to support youth work practice and participation.
- Ensuring impeccable governance in line with our Membership Charter.



Our Work in Support of Policy

Our work is integral to the implementation of national and European policy in all matters relating to youth work, youth participation, society and active citizenship (see pages 16 and 17 for a full list of policies). Youth work cuts across the work of most government departments and policy priorities in particular those with a remit relating to young people, youth justice, health, social care, mental health and wellbeing, building healthy communities, active citizenship, volunteering, lifelong learning, education and training.

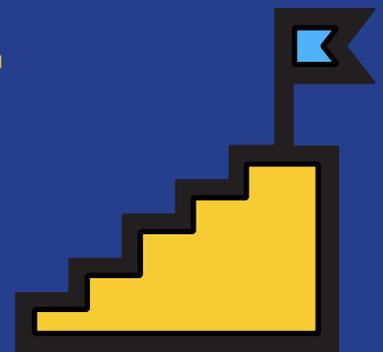
Our Vision is:

An Ireland of equality, access, and participation for all young people.



Our Mission is:

To work together with our Member Youth Services to inspire, educate and empower all young people.



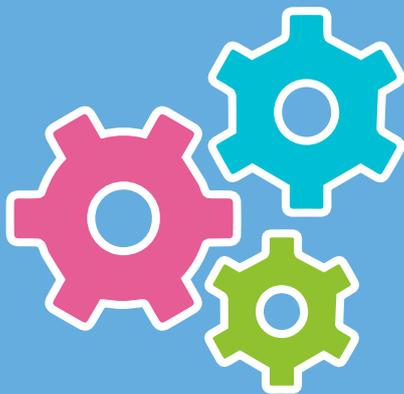
Our Values:

We believe that youth work is a unique process of transformation that is voluntary, youth-led and young person centred. This means that young people who engage with us do so in a voluntary capacity and they decide and choose which activities they take part in.

We believe in a strengths-based approach to youth work that sees the value and strength in each young person, and we work with our Member Youth Services to support young people to reach their potential. We believe in equal opportunities for all young people.

We are an inclusive and member-centred organisation and we embrace youth work values in all we do.

We bring the following values to our way of working, together as a team, within Youth Work Ireland:



Collaboration and Partnership



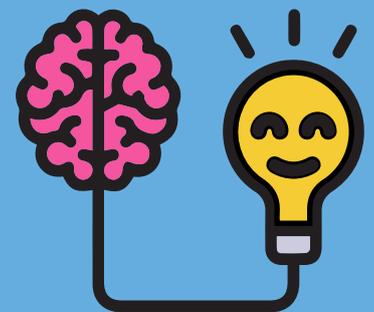
Inclusion and Participation



Accountability and Integrity



Listening and Learning



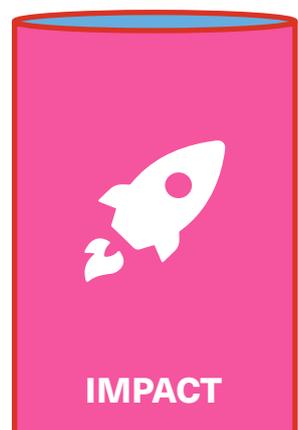
Excellence and Innovation

Our Strategic Pillars 2022-2027

There are four strategic pillars to structure and direct Youth Work Ireland, in service to our Member Youth Services over the next five years - **COMMUNICATION, ADVOCACY, SUPPORT & IMPACT.**

These pillars represent continuance and deepening of our work at the National Office and across the federation.

They will inform our operational plan, our annual work plans and will be underpinned by the firm foundation of our organisational governance, competence and commitment.



01



Strategic Pillar One:

COMMUNICATION

We will promote and communicate our work, as a National Office, in service to our Member Youth Services and to confirm our role as an organisation for our organisations within Youth Work Ireland.

To advance our work under this pillar we will:

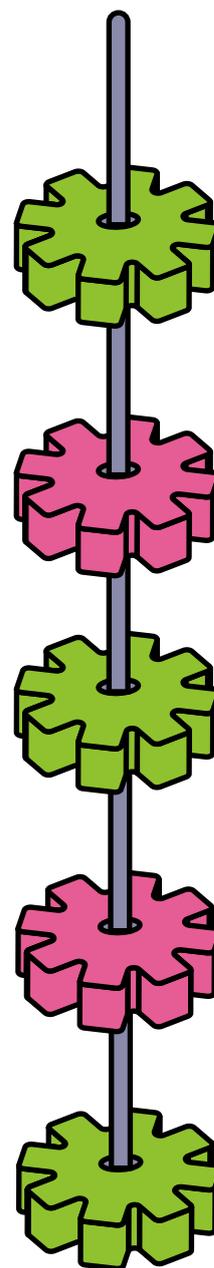
Communicate our role and purpose as the National Office in service to the federation and as set out in our Membership Charter.

Co-create a communication strategy, and plan for the federation in partnership with our Member Youth Services.

Work in unison with the federation to purposefully show and share the value of youth work, youth participation and youth clubs.

Tell the story of the work of the federation, through a range of methods, researching, documenting and affirming the benefits and power of youth work to transform lives.

Celebrate and share the power and positivity of youth work as a vital and valuable way to address policy imperatives.



Tracking Our Progress

We will track our progress by monitoring awareness of Youth Work Ireland and the federation and how the work supports the implementation of policy and practice in all matters relating to youth, youth work and youth clubs.

02



Strategic Pillar Two: ADVOCACY

We will continue to advocate, as a National Office of the federation, on all matters relating to youth work and young people as identified by our Member Youth Services. We are, and will continue to be, the collective voice for our Member Youth Services and young people.

To advance our work under this pillar we will:

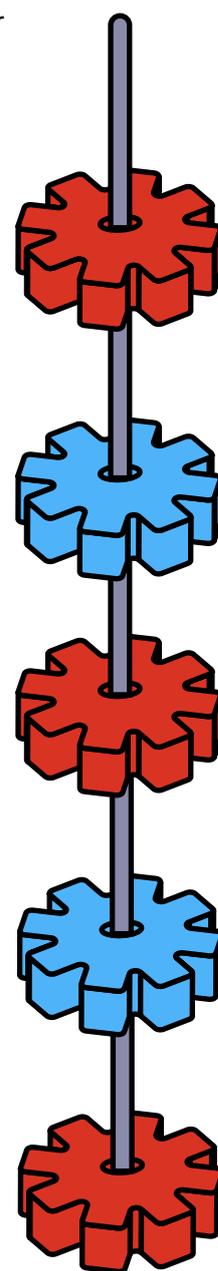
Co-create an advocacy strategy and plan for the federation in partnership with our Member Youth Services.

Respond to issues arising and seize opportunities to advocate on matters relevant to youth and youth work as identified by our Member Youth Services.

Work with our Member Youth Services to harness the local lessons and stories from their work on the ground in order to formulate national policy messages from shared experiences.

Be the first point of consultation for government departments on youth work, youth clubs and youth related matters.

Claim the space through assertive communication of the value of youth work as an enabler of good outcomes for young people.



Tracking Our Progress

We will track our progress by monitoring the advocacy messages and their impact on public awareness, policy formation and the evolution of youth work.

03



Strategic Pillar Three: SUPPORT

We will strengthen our organisational structure and the full range of supports we offer in response to needs articulated by our Member Youth Services. We will work to maximise the power and potential of the federal model.

To advance our work under this pillar we will:

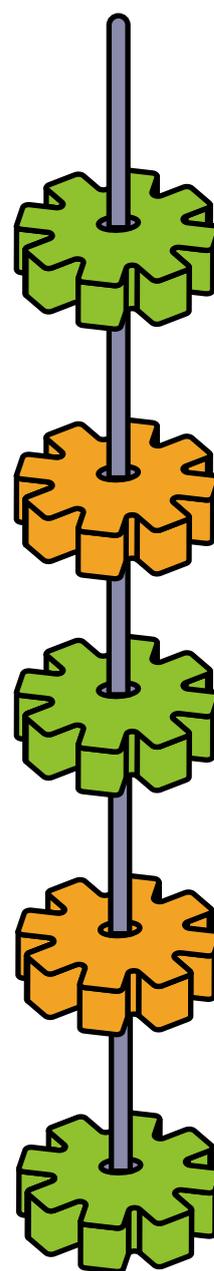
Review and reaffirm the federal model in collaboration with Member Youth Services as the optimal model for youth work in Ireland.

Listen and respond to emerging training, developmental and reflective practice needs of Member Youth Services.

Recognise the central role of volunteers and renew our support offering to ensure pathways, training and developmental opportunities, and updated policies.

Strengthen volunteer networks to support and value volunteering.

Maximise the federal structure to support and encourage our Member Youth Services through focused supports including compliance, governance, standards, quality, digital agility and safeguarding.



Tracking Our Progress

We will track our progress by monitoring the level, type and impact of supports that we offer through the National Office and cascade out into the federation of Member Youth Services.

04



Strategic Pillar Four:

IMPACT

We will reinforce our work, with and through Member Youth Services to achieve optimal outcomes for young people. We will continue to monitor, evaluate, and research our work in order to evidence the impact.

To advance our work under this pillar we will:

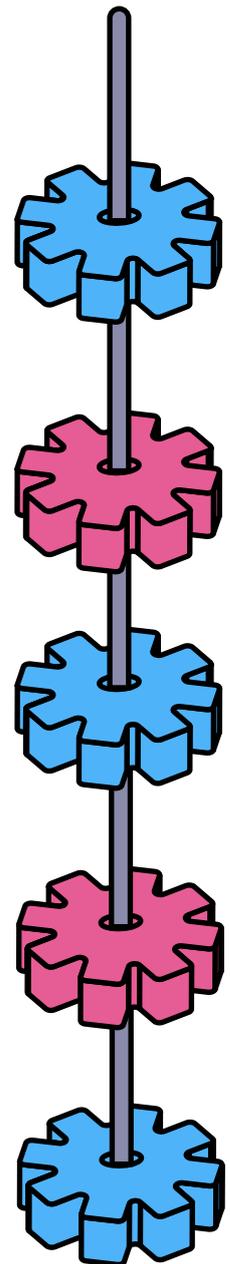
Collaborate and partner with others in the co-design and implementation of effective national programmes and practices based on robust research.

Draw out and document practice and advocacy lessons from, and in collaboration with, our network, and mainstream innovative practices.

Create strategic partnerships with research bodies to bring to the fore evidence to demonstrate the impact of youth work on individuals, communities and wider society.

Nurture partnerships with all key stakeholders.

Lead out in the design of a research programme with partners to explore contemporary themes in youth work practice and keep open dialogue to inform and shape policy



Tracking Our Progress

We will track our progress by monitoring the practice lessons, learning and research produced and its impact on youth work practice, policy and people.

Appendix One: Consultation Process

Sources for our Strategy

This Strategic Statement was informed by research and reflection, a review of policy and a process of consultation with the stakeholders involved in and interested in our work.

We consulted with our primary funders, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

We consulted with our external stakeholders, colleagues representing organisations across the youth, vocational education and training, adult education, lifelong learning, and youth services sectors.

We consulted with and listened to young people from our Member Youth Services.

We listened internally to the Youth Work Ireland team and across the federation to the Regional Directors and Member Youth Services.

We appreciate all contributions to the development of this Strategic Statement. We value all feedback received as it affirms and informs our future work.

Strategic Pointers

The following are the strategic pointers, arising from our background research and stakeholder consultations, including the voice of our Member Youth Services. These pointers position our work and reinforce our strategic priorities for 2022-2027.

Theme 1 Identity

1. **Clarify the identity** and purpose of Youth Work Ireland bringing a coherent approach to capacity building and support for Member Youth Services and the sector nationally. This includes knowledge sharing for best practice, quality, influencing policy and advocacy.
2. **Maximise and modernise the power** of the federal structure and arrangements, as the highest level of organisation and the one most suitable to the strategic intentions of the federation.
3. **Advance decision making** about the way our organisation is organised, developed, strengthened and reoriented to reflect our purpose and the strategic focus of our work.

Theme 2 Context

4. **Claim the space** that is youth work and bring robust research, tracking, monitoring and evaluation to the fore, so as to position youth work as a singular ideology and vital practice within the policy frame.
5. **Work constructively and creatively** within the context, complex and complicated arena of youth work and make strategic choices around universal and/or targeted approaches in tandem with policy priorities.
6. **Work with the evolving funding mechanisms** including the increased targeted nature of interventions, with a focus on prevention and particular areas of vulnerability and disadvantage.
7. **Generate and support understanding and acceptance** of the different funding structures of the different departments (e.g., UBU, Tusla) related mechanisms/models and capacity to respond to the challenges these bring.

Theme 3

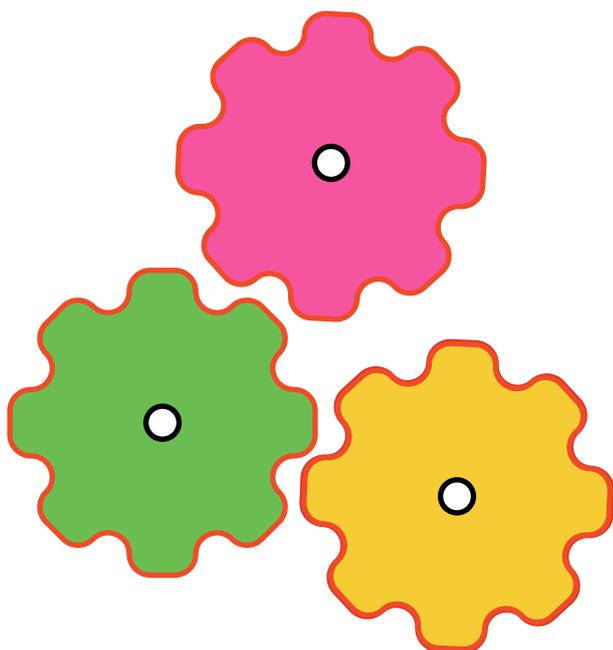
Advocacy

8. Drive forward collective and coherent advocacy, education and engagement with policy makers and actively pursue opportunities to position youth work as a powerful and valuable intervention and tried and trusted policy response across many domains, including personal development, health and citizenship.

Theme 5

Participation

11. Pioneer advancement in collaboration and participation, refining and innovating the ways in which we work together and involve young people - giving meaningful voice, at all levels, in the policy decision making processes, from start to completion and show clearly how their work/voice influences policy.



Theme 4

Relationships

9. Nurture relationships with the full range of Government departments and policy priorities in service to young people who come under the remit of many departments.
10. Strengthen existing relationships and seek out new alliances, strategic synergies and specific interagency collaboration and working arrangements.

Theme 6

Innovation

12. Continue to reach out promoting and expanding youth engagement, participation, universally and with specific target audiences in mind.
13. Showcase specifically selected pieces of work, within the federation, including EU and international examples to illustrate the positive, transformative benefit of youth work.
14. Value volunteering and volunteers by bringing renewed vigour to capacity building, appreciation, recognition and support for volunteers.
15. Advance the digital opportunities and innovative angles for youth work and be open to all the possibilities this brings for expansion, inclusion and participation.

Appendix Two: Policies and Government Priorities of Relevance to our Work:

International

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Youth Policy in Ireland

- National Youth Strategy 2015-2020, Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Statement of Strategy 2021-2023, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020
- National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making, Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Youth Justice Strategy, 2021-2027, Department of Justice
- LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020
- National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021, Department of Justice and Equality

European

- EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027
- Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, European Commission
- Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework (ET2020)
- Council of Europe Strategy 2030
- European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA)
- New Skills Agenda 2020 (VET)
- The Green Deal
- EU Children's Strategy
- Achieving the European Education Area by 2025
- Peace Programme

Education Policy in Ireland

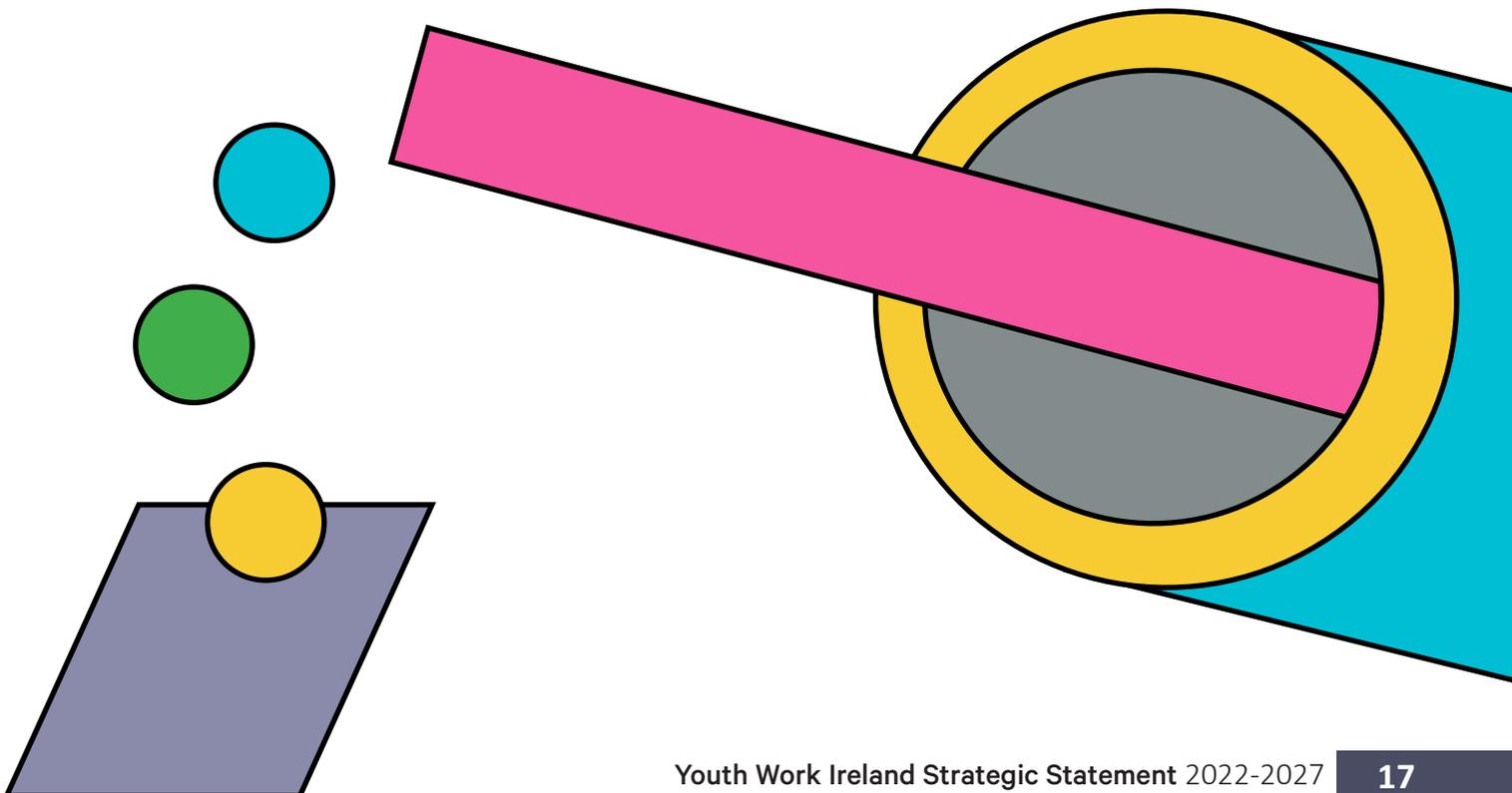
- Empowering through Learning - Department of Education Statement of Strategy 2019 – 2021
- Pathways to Work Strategy, 2021-2025, Department of Social Protection
- The Action Plan for Education, Department of Education
- Future FET Transforming Learning: SOLAS Further Education and Training Strategy 2020-2024
- Apprenticeship Action Plan 2021-2025, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages 2017-2026, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science

Education Policy in Ireland cont.

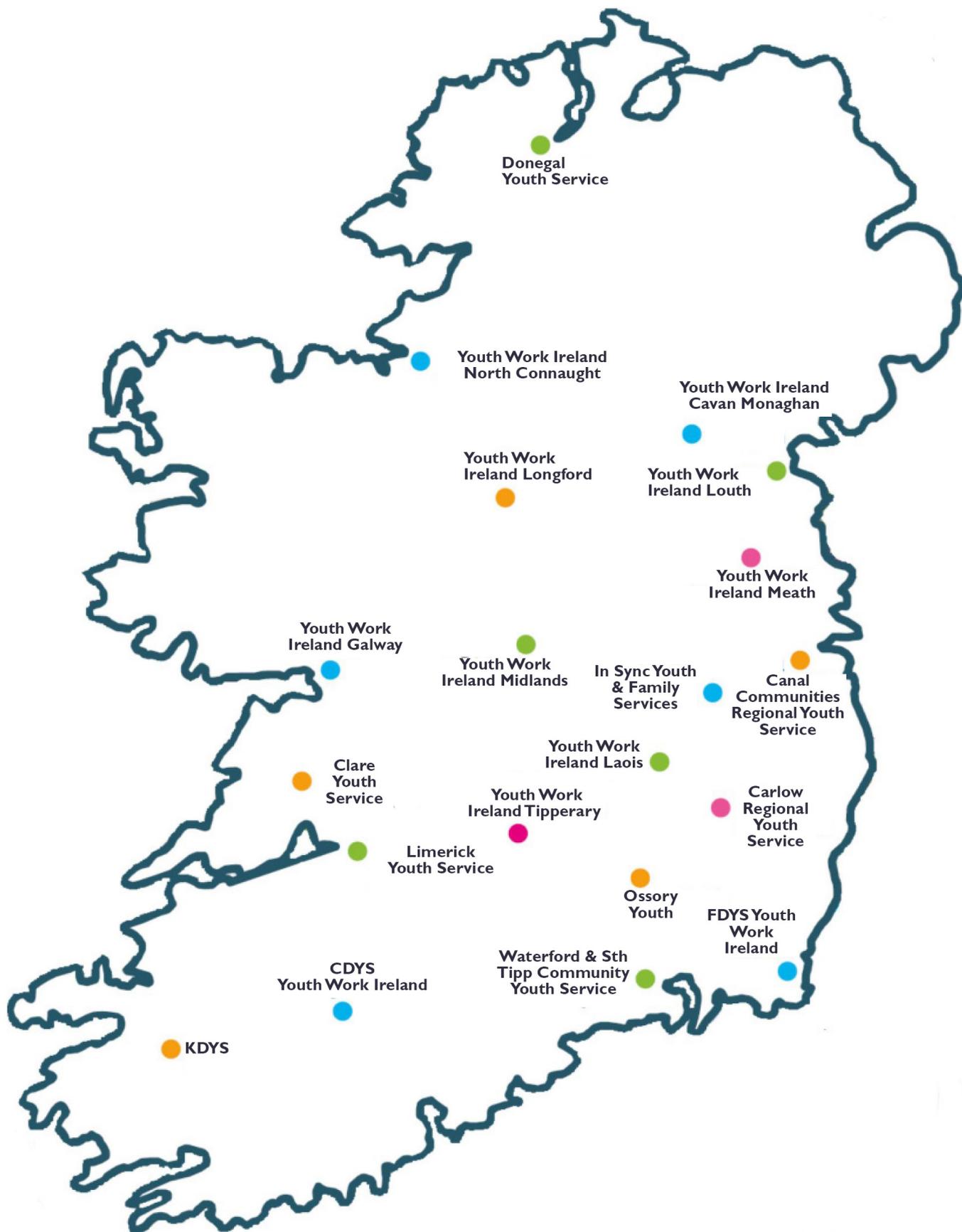
- STEM Education Policy 2017-2026, Department of Education
- Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science
- Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020, Department of Education
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Healthy Ireland
- A Vision for Change: A report of the expert group on mental health policy, HSE
- Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025 – The National Substance Misuse Policy

Other Relevant Policies

- National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025, Department of Rural and Community Development
- Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A Five-Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland 2019-2024, Department of Rural and Community Development
- The Climate Action Plan 2021, Department of Environment, Climate and Communities
- Global Ireland Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025
- Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025, Department of Rural and Community Development



Youth Work Ireland



Member Youth Services

Canal Communities Regional Youth Service
www.ccrys.org

Carlow Regional Youth Service
www.carlowrys.com

CDYS Youth Work Ireland
www.cdys.ie

Clare Youth Service
www.facebook.com/clareyouthservice

Donegal Youth Service
www.donegalyouthservice.ie

FDYS
www.fdys.ie

In Sync Youth and Family Services
www.insync.ie

KDYS
www.kdys.ie

Limerick Youth Service
www.limerickyouthservice.com

Ossory Youth
www.ossoryyouth.com

Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service
www.wstcys.ie

Youth Work Ireland Cavan/Monaghan
www.ywimonaghan.ie

Youth Work Ireland County Longford
www.lcrl.ie/youth-service

Youth Work Ireland Galway
www.youthworkgalway.ie

Youth Work Ireland Laois
www.ywilaois.com

Youth Work Ireland Louth
www.youthworkirelandlouth.ie

Youth Work Ireland Meath
www.youthworkirelandmeath.ie

Youth Work Ireland Midlands
www.youthworkmidlands.org

Youth Work Ireland North Connaught
www.ncycs.ie

Youth Work Ireland Tipperary
www.youthworktipperary.ie

National Office

Youth Work Ireland National Office

20 Lower Dominick Street

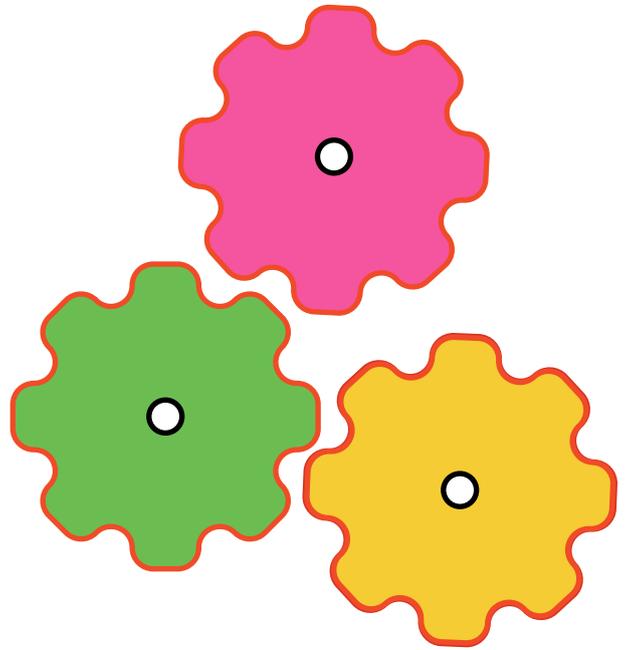
Dublin 1

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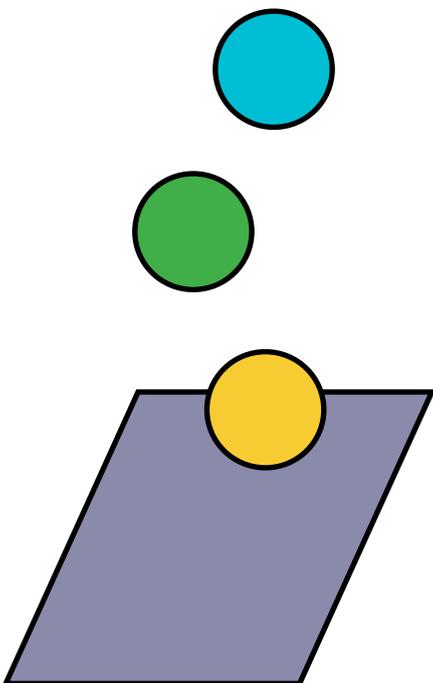
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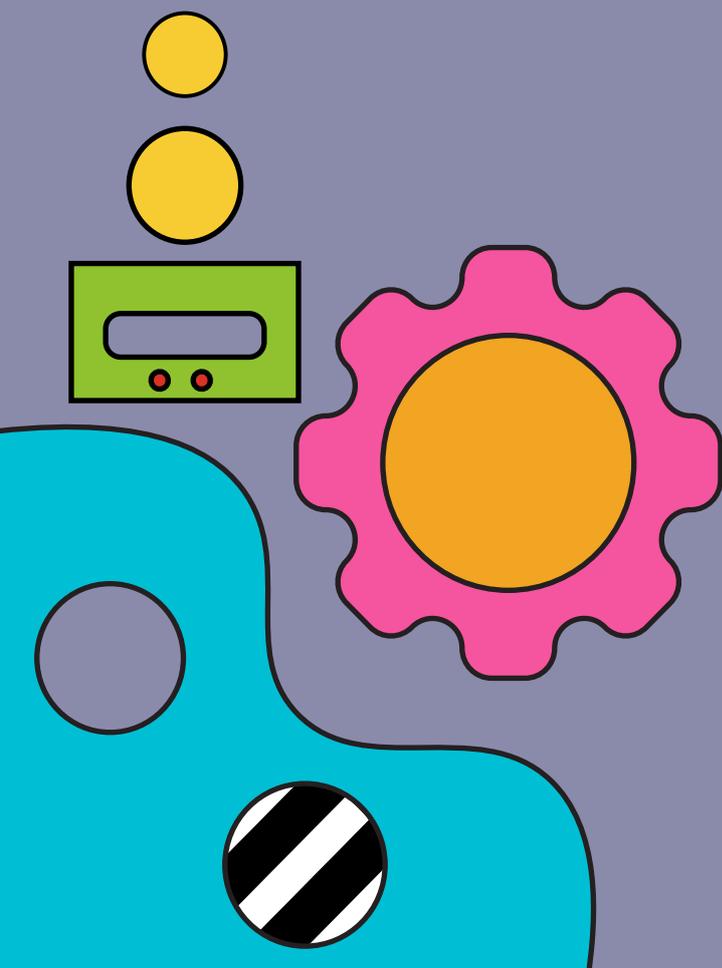


Notes:





Youth Work Ireland



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

