

**ACTION PLAN FOR
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

Building an Inclusive Island



**CREATION
OF A YFG
WOMEN'S
NETWORK**

**TO COMPILE A
COMPREHENSIVE
POLICY DOCUMENT
ON NORTHERN
IRELAND.**

**PROMOTE THE
RECENTLY PUBLISHED
NATIONAL LGBTI+
YOUTH STRATEGY AND
EXAMINE THE POTENTIAL
FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF
ITS RECOMMENDATIONS
WITHIN YFG.**

**RUN A CAMPAIGN
FOCUSED ON
THE 5 RECOGNISED
BARRIERS FOR WOMEN
ENTERING POLITICS –
KNOWN AS THE 5 C'S.**

**LONG-TERM
STRATEGY FOR
THE INCLUSION
OF WOMEN IN
THE PARTY**

**CAMPAIGN
AGAINST
HOMOPHOBIC/
TRANSPHOBIC
BULLYING.**

Action plan for diversity and inclusion

Dear Member,

Young Fine Gael's mission is to be a voice for young people across our island; I hope through some of the actions contained within this document we can attract new members from around the country, but crucially members from various cultures and backgrounds. Our democracy in many ways is unfinished due to the underrepresentation of sections of our society. For our democracy to be a success we must include all young people, not just the few. For Young Fine Gael to be a success it must also include all.

Ireland in the past number of years has changed, changed for the better. Fine Gael in Government has brought forward a number of socially progressive referenda, which has resulted in important changes for our society. We as a nation have shown we want people to control their own lives and chart their own path. Politics must continue to do that it must enable each citizen to reach their potential.

This document is a specific list of measures for internal reform and actions designed to bring political engagement to all four corners of our island. I am hopeful these actions will change the conversations our members have around social and economic issues. This in turn will feed into the creation of future policy for Young Fine Gael.

This action plan is a culmination of work by various people who are committed to delivering equality in our organisation, our party and our country.

I am proud of the document we have developed and of the ambitious actions, and indeed commitments we have made in this Action Plan. I would like to acknowledge the work done by the members of the Young Fine Gael Engagement sub-committee who assisted in bring together this document.

This action plan is not a box ticking exercise it is a real and substantial commitment to making YFG a more inclusive organisation. Perhaps the best definition of inclusion is one by Franklin D Roosevelt who stated, "We must build a society where nobody feels left out". That is the challenge we have set.

No one person no matter their passion for or dedication to that ambition can make these changes alone. I am asking all of you to join myself and the National Executive on its mission to build a stronger, more inclusive, more diverse organisation.



Conor McGowan

Conor McGowan
Director of Membership and Engagement



Actions

1 ACTION

Run an annual solution-based brainstorming session with a focus on diversity and inclusion.

RATIONALE

The input of ordinary members of the organisation to YFG's inclusion strategy will be essential in ensuring that units of the organisation are willing to commit to the goals therein. A session such as this would allow members who are part of marginalised groups to highlight issues important to them, which may be overlooked or not identified by a subcommittee or National Executive. It is important that the focus on identifying and implementing solutions is maintained rather than a debate occurring on whether the issues exist.

2 ACTION

The creation of a Women's Network for members of Young Fine Gael.

RATIONALE

Women in YFG sometimes lack a network to engage with and meet one another. The purpose of such a network would be to organise female oriented events like boot camps and workshops helping young women to engage with the various issues that affect them, and the barriers that prevent them from actively engaging in the party. This network will also work to encourage more female members to become more active in YFG and build their confidence in running at branch, regional and national level both internally and electorally.

3 ACTION

Set up a Pairing System for younger female members with more experienced members, including elected representatives.

RATIONALE

The idea behind a pairing system is that younger and less experienced members would be able to seek help and receive encouragement from more experienced. Pairing or mentoring is a proven and recommended method of building confidence in younger people and preparing them for elections, promotions etc. A pairing system will also introduce a much-needed contact point for new members.

4 ACTION

Create a medium to long-term strategy for the inclusion of women in the party, as well as stimulating a discussion around existing issues and potential solutions with women who are currently active within Young Fine Gael and Fine Gael. The creation of this strategy will feature a women's think in so the document can be based on the experiences of women in the party.

RATIONALE

It is clear that there is a significant gender imbalance within YFG, and while some improvements have been made, a longer-term strategy drafted in consultation with members who have experience of the issues at hand will contribute to creating a more inclusive organisation for women. A long-term strategy will also ensure that commitments carry over regardless of changes to the National Executive following National Conference, and will allow realistic aims to be achieved over the course of a number of years. The National Executive which is in place at the conclusion of this long term strategy should assess its effectiveness and if it is deemed necessary, draft a new strategy.

5 ACTION
Run a campaign focused on the 5 recognised barriers for women entering politics – known as the 5 C's. It is vital we demonstrate the positive impact greater number of women have had on the political landscape. Such a campaign would be run in the lead up to International Women's Day 2019 and will include a campaign on the difficulties facing younger women in politics.

RATIONALE

Visibility is key here. We must highlight the barriers facing women entering politics and simultaneously offer solutions to the barriers. We must also demonstrate the positive impact greater numbers of women in politics could have and the changes in political discourse since the 2016 General Election.

6 ACTION
Propose an amendment to Young Fine Gael's current policy on National Gender Quotas at Summer School 2019.

RATIONALE

As a youth party we must be bold when we talk about the future. We in Young Fine Gael believe that the time is right to push for an increase in the gender quota percentage. While the legislation provides for an increase to 40% in 2023 we believe that such a delay is unwarranted and 40% quotas should be in place from 2020. While calling for the increase, we realise that we must play our part in ensuring our members male and female continue to be active in our senior party.

7 ACTION
College branches and regional councils should organise one event per year focusing on women in politics or a similar diversity themed event.

RATIONALE

While in recent times an emphasis has been placed on women entering politics, we must ensure we encourage the conversation to continue, as the youth wing of Fine Gael, a party that is committed to encouraging more women to enter politics we must add our voices to the debate today and into the future as more measures are announced.

8 ACTION
Promote the recently published National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy and examine the potential for implementation of its recommendations within YFG.

RATIONALE

The very welcome LGBTI+ Youth Strategy was launched by Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr. Katherine Zappone TD, in June 2018. The strategy represents the first of its kind in the world. As the youth wing of the party of Government, we must fight to make LGBTI+ young people feel safe and secure in our country. Politics must also be a welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds, therefore YFG will do its utmost to generate that welcoming environment.'

9 ACTION
Campaign against homophobic/transphobic bullying.

RATIONALE

We've modernised greatly as a country and as a society, having become more accepting of our LGBTI+ citizens and having become the first country to legalise marriage equality by popular vote. However, homophobic and (especially) transphobic bullying still exists. We as a youth wing should run a campaign aimed at stamping out homophobic/transphobic bullying, particularly amongst young people.



- 10 ACTION**
Young Fine Gael will offer Safe Talk training to members

RATIONALE

While much has been done to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health in Ireland, there is more to be done. YFG should always encourage greater awareness around mental health

- 11 ACTION**
YFG will invite Shout Out to do a workshop for members of YFG.

RATIONALE

As the representative from Shout Out was unable to attend Summer School 2018 YFG should organise a Shout Out workshop in Dublin and invite all of our membership to attend. Shout out exists to prevent transphobic bullying and to raise awareness of issues facing trans people in Ireland

- 12 ACTION**
Delegate tags should include a space where people may indicate their preferred pronouns.

RATIONALE

While the inclusion of "other" as a gender option on YFG membership forms is a welcome step. The ability for people to indicate their preferred pronouns if they so choose to do so would avoid people having to inform others, particularly at large scale events such as Summer School and National Conference.

- 13 ACTION**
Organise an Intercultural night in association with Fine Gael Intercultural.

RATIONALE

The party organised a 'New Members Night' back in summer 2016 aimed at welcoming new members to the party. It was a high-profile event, hosted by Gerry O'Connell, Brian Hayes MEP, Kate O'Connell TD, Eoghan Murphy TD, and featuring an address by and photocall with iar-Thaoiseach Enda Kenny. An intercultural event has been suggested by several members of Fine Gael Intercultural. By hosting such an event, we would show ourselves to be a party accepting of our new and emerging communities and one willing to hear their ideas. Intercultural members may invite friends or family who may be inspired to join.

- 14 ACTION**
Lobby the Government to legislate for hate crime, in line with Young Fine Gael policy adopted at National Conference in 2016.

RATIONALE

Hate crime is a pressing issue in Ireland, with a rise in the number of hate crimes in recent years. Amongst the groups primarily targeted are ethnic minority groups, religious minorities, members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender community and people with disabilities. The level of fear that hate crimes can pose on the communities most at risk can lead to feelings of isolation from the rest of society, as well as psychological issues of anxiety and depression. The fact that a specific motivator on a crime is not legislated as illegal can lead to crimes not being reported, this can further lead to lack of trust in the judicial system by the victims of hate crimes and the by the communities who are most at risk.

15 ACTION

Young Fine Gael will build a working relationship with Fine Gael Intercultural.

RATIONALE

Similar to the relationship YFG has with YPN and FG LGBT, YFG should work in close association with FG Intercultural to further advance the mission of both organisations to make Ireland a more equal place.

16 ACTION

Campaign to implement the recommendations of a "Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy"

RATIONALE

The report is 10 years old and many of its actions have yet to be implemented. The more recent Roma and Traveller Inclusion Strategy included the need to review and update the Report from 2005. This report and its recommendations need to be implemented to improve the acceptability of the education system to Traveller's. Our education system must however enable opportunity for all for this ambition to become a reality.

17 ACTION

Contact members of the parliamentary party to ask that when secondary school students undertake work experience in their office, or when they are visiting schools and speaking to students, they contact their local YFG branch to invite a member to meet the students in question.

RATIONALE

While YFG has a strong presence each year at third level recruitment, it is not possible for the organisation to recruit in secondary schools. This contributes to the lower level of membership in the 15-18 age group. However secondary school students often undertake work experience with a TD or Senator, and may be interested in becoming involved with YFG if they are aware that a branch is active in their constituency and membership is open to them. If they are able to meet a local member during the

course of their work experience, they will know at least one person if they go to attend an event, and may be more willing to go to local meetings as a result. Additionally if a member can speak even briefly to secondary school students outlining their experience as a young person in politics, some of those students may see an opportunity for them to become involved.

18 ACTION

Run a campaign raising awareness around the inclusion of those with disabilities in our political sphere, particularly general learning disabilities.

RATIONALE

We will run a campaign to raise awareness of general learning disabilities, and the need to support and encourage people of all abilities into politics. We will work with other advocacy organisations such as AslAm to reach out and encourage those with disabilities into politics.

19 ACTION

Young Fine Gael will work in close association with Fine Gael's Young Professional Network.

RATIONALE

YFG has a membership drop off post-college; we must ensure we retain as many members as possible so as to represent the widest possible views and opinions. The YPN presents an opportunity for us to work in close association with members who have expertise across a wide variety of fields who could advise us on campaigns and policy documents.

20 ACTION

To compile a comprehensive policy document on Northern Ireland.

RATIONALE

Brexit has ignited the fire around a possible border poll; YFG's constitution refers to the organisations as the "Young United Irishmen". We believe the time has come to begin to imagine what a united Ireland could look like. We are not calling for a border poll at this time, in order to avoid further uncertainty however we wish to create a fact based road map to a united Ireland that could be implemented when the time is right.



Constitutional Amendments

(To be submitted by the National Executive to the steering committee for the 30th Young Fine Gael Conference)

AMENDMENT 1
Amendment to the Preamble of the YFG Constitution to state that Young Fine Gael is a party of the progressive centre.

RATIONALE

Often members at recruitment stands are asked what YFG stands for. Including this in the preamble of the constitution will bring clarity, bring YFG into line with the Fine Gael party, and ensure that YFG's progressive, inclusive ethos is recognised in its most important document.

AMENDMENT 2
Amendment to Article 1.3 of the YFG Constitution to insert the words 'and inclusive' so it reads "The Organisation shall formulate policy representative and inclusive of the membership of Young Fine Gael."

RATIONALE

This amendment seeks to ensure that YFG policy does not alienate marginalised groups e.g. if a policy relates to a minority group, that its aim is to further their inclusion in society.

AMENDMENT 3
Amendment to the Constitution so that all uses of 'he' or 'she' to refer to the President or Officers are replaced with gender neutral language e.g. 'they.'

RATIONALE

Although Article 12.3 addresses this to some extent, amending the constitution so that high-ranking positions in the organisation are not automatically assumed to be held by men will be a greater signal of inclusivity.

AMENDMENT 4
Amend Article 5.2(d) of the YFG Constitution so it reads "Up to three additional members co-opted by the President to redress any imbalances that exist as regards region, skills, and diversity."

RATIONALE

The more diverse the National Executive, the more representative it will be of the membership. While simple tokenism should be avoided, we recognise already that all regions should have adequate representation at National Executive level, and the same rationale should be taken into account where the Executive is unrepresentative in other areas e.g. gender.



**AMENDMENT 5,6&7**

Amend article 5.16 so it reads "the National Executive may appoint sub-committees as deemed necessary and shall determine the power and duration of such sub-committees. Any such subcommittee must have a minimum of 30% of its membership female and 30% male."

Amend article 6.11 (a) so it reads "One ordinary member of the National Executive of Young Fine Gael shall be elected from each of the following regions:

- I. The province of Leinster (excluding Dublin)
- II. The county of Dublin
- III. The province of Munster
- IV. The provinces of Connacht and Ulster.

In the event no female candidate contests a Regional Organiser election or is elected in such an election the President must co-opt a female within 90 days of National Conference.

Amend article 6.11 (b) so it reads "Four ordinary members of the National Executive of Young Fine Gael shall be elected from a National Constituency, as in the manner of the Presidential Executive Council Representative Elections. The member elected to the first seat in the National Constituency shall be the nominee for the Organisation's third seat on the Fine Gael Executive Council. Should no female contest or be elected the National Constituency the President must co-opt a female within 90 days of National Conference.

RATIONALE

We must at all time encourage women to run for elections, however we must also increase the visibility of women within YFG should no female candidates put their names forward the president must take steps to increase the visibility and participation of women at the top table of the organisation.

**AMENDMENT 7&8**

Amend Article 4.4 so it reads ", a public relations officer and an inclusion officer"

Propose the addition of Article 10.6

"Each Regional Council will have a Regional Inclusion Officer who will coordinate with the Branch Inclusion Officers in their region and work with the National Youth Officer and Members of the National Executive"

RATIONALE

The addition of inclusion officers at every level of the organisation will strengthen the national ambition of Young Fine Gael to become a more inclusive political group. This will also facilitate events based on diversity and inclusion to be held at branch and regional level.





The National Executive of Young Fine Gael



Killian Foley-Walsh

President

Mobile: 087 2131882

Email: killian.foleywalsh@yfg.ie

Branches: Kilkenny YFG



Genevieve O'Mahony (She/Her)

Vice President

Mobile: 089 4770681

Email: genevieve.omahony@yfg.ie

Branch: Dublin South West YFG



Art O'Mahony

National Secretary and Director of Policy

Mobile: 083 1971667

Email: art.omahony@yfg.ie

Branches: Kerry/UCC YFG



Conor McGowan (He/Him)

Director of Membership and Engagement

Mobile: 085 7470075

Email: conor.mcgowan@yfg.ie

Branches: Limerick/UCD YFG



Daniel Lynch (He/Him)

Director of Campaigns and Recruitment

Mobile: 085 8244507

Email: daniel.lynch@yfg.ie

Branches: Cork North West/UL YFG



Mark Kavanagh

Director of Marketing

Mobile: 083 4269676

Email: mark.kavanagh@yfg.ie

Branch: Wexford YFG



Ian Hutchinson (He/Him)

Ireland South Organiser

Mobile: 086 3035624

Email: ian.hutchinson@yfg.ie

Branches: Cork North Central/UCC YFG



Mourad Mejdi (He/Him)

Ireland East Organiser

Mobile: 085 1594304

Email: mourad.mejdi@yfg.ie

Branches: Meath/UCD YFG



Sinead Bolger (She/Her)

Ireland North West Organiser

Mobile: 085 1816423

Email: sinead.bolger@yfg.ie

Branch: NUIG YFG



Eoin Scarlett

Dublin Organiser

Mobile: 087 6430154

Email: eoin.scarlett@yfg.ie

Branches: Dublin Bay North/ Trinity YFG



Chloe Kennedy

Director of Communications

Mobile: 086 2601042

Email: chloe.kennedy@yfg.ie

Branch: Trinity YFG

Membership of the Engagement Sub Committee



Chairperson
Conor McGowan (He/Him)
Director of Membership and Engagement
Branches: Limerick/UCD YFG



Daniel Lynch (He/Him)
Branch: NUIG YFG



Vice Chairperson
Genevieve O'Mahony (She/Her)
Vice President
Branch: Dublin South West YFG



Clodagh Murray (She/Her)
Branch: Dublin Fingal



Luke Corkery (He/Him)
Secretary
Branch: Dublin Fingal YFG



Lucy Roche (She/Her)
Branch: UCC YFG



Rebecca Gegan (She/Her)
Branch: Clare YFG



Mike Taylor (He/Him)
Branches: NUIG/ Clare YFG



YOUNG FINE GAEL

Young Fine Gael (YFG) is the youth wing of the Fine Gael party and always welcomes new members aged between 15 and 35. YFG is the only vehicle for young people to seek political change in this country. As an autonomous youth organisation, it has the advantage of embodying the values of the Fine Gael Party, while maintaining the independence to express views of young people.

Members of YFG can also be members of Fine Gael and take part fully in the party at all levels. YFG has its own President and National Executive.

YFG believes strongly in the ideal of the European Union and is a member of the Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP) an organisation of one and a half million members. YFG has been influenced by the ideas of Christian Democracy and Compassionate Centrism. This means that YFG, like Fine Gael, evaluates everything and tries to move on what it sees as the right thing to do in each given situation. Over the years, we have developed wide ranging policies at this level, and in recent years we have been at the forefront of YEPP, devising successful and important policy resolutions on topics like improving EU banking regulations or introducing an EU-wide vetting scheme for youth and children workers.

For more information about Young Fine Gael

Fine Gael National Headquarters,

51 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2

Phone: 01 619 8444 Fax: 01 662 5046

Email: yfg@yfg.ie Web: www.yfg.ie

www.yfg.ie

Fine Gael National Headquarters, 51 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2

☎ 01 619 8444 📧 yfg@yfg.ie 🌐 www.yfg.ie

🐦 @yfg 📺 /young.finegael 📷 young_fine_gael 🌐 Young Fine Gael



YFG

YOUNG FINE GAEL