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## Welcome to Young Fine Gael

Whether you're deeply interested in politics or just starting to explore it, you've joined a community of young people who care about making a difference in their communities, their constituencies, their college, and across the country.

Since YFG was founded in 1977, it has held one clear purpose: giving young people a voice. YFG exists to ensure that the ideas of young people are not only heard but also actively shape politics and decision-making in Ireland. As the autonomous youth wing of Fine Gael, YFG has long been seen as the conscience of the senior party, a space where bold ideas are welcomed and where young members are encouraged to work together and lead.

Over the years, YFG members have gone on to lead campaigns, write and pass motions and legislation, represent Fine Gael in Ireland and abroad, run for local and national office, and some have even led the party and the country. Taoisigh and Party Leaders Leo Varadkar and Simon Harris began their political journeys in YFG and many other YFG members have went on to serve terms in Dáil and Seanad Éireann and as members of the Government of Ireland. Just as importantly though, thousands of members have made lifelong friends and memories, all while working within the Fine Gael Family to better represent the needs and concerns of young people in Ireland.

This guide is here to help you get started in the organisation. It will introduce you to how YFG works, what we stand for, and how you can get involved, whether that's on the ground, canvassing or leafleting, writing policy, taking part in national and local events, or attending branch meetings.

All you need is an open mind and a willingness to get involved. Every member brings a unique voice. You could be here for many different reasons, but there is always a place for you in YFG.

## About Young Fine Gael

Young Fine Gael, or YFG, is the autonomous youth wing of Fine Gael, created to give young people a real voice in Irish politics. It was founded in 1977 by Iar-Taoiseach and Party Leader Garret FitzGerald, who believed that young people should have a meaningful role in shaping political decisions and national policy.

Since its foundation, YFG has grown into a strong national organisation for members aged 15–35, with active constituency and college branches right across the country. From its early days in the late 1970s campaigning on issues like European integration and supporting same-sex marriage, to its current focus on passing the Spiking Bill that it drafted, YFG has continued to lead on youth-focused policy.

YFG is closely affiliated with Fine Gael and shares the party's core values: equality of opportunity, enterprise and reward, safety and security in our society, while insisting integrity and ambition remain at the heart of everything we do. However, YFG operates independently, with the freedom to adopt its own policy positions and challenge the senior party when we feel it is necessary to ensure that a youth perspective is heard within the Fine Gael family.

YFG has been a crucial starting point for many of Ireland's most prominent political figures. This includes former Taoisigh and Fine Gael leaders Leo Varadkar and Simon Harris who were active YFG members; others include former Minister and Deputy Leader Simon Coveney, and many others.

Over the years, YFG has been a home for young people, with many going on to become Councillors, Senators, TDs, Ministers, and even Taoisigh. YFG remains rooted in its founding mission: to be a space for young people to share ideas and shape policy from the perspective of young people while being a place to socialise and make connections.

YFG combines three main things: developing policy for young people by young people, grassroots activism and campaigning, and the social side of making lasting lifelong friendships.

## How YFG Works

### YFG Branch Structure & Roles

YFG is a national organisation made up of local branches which are mostly based on constituencies. Every member belongs to at least one branch, and in turn, that branch belongs to one senior party constituency. Understanding the basic structure will help you get the most out of your time in YFG and know who to turn to when you need support or want to get more involved.

### Branches: College and Constituency

YFG branches are the building blocks of the organisation. **There are two types:**

**College branches** operate within third-level institutions like universities. They're often the most active during the academic year, running events on campus and engaging directly with students. Some notable YFG university branches are DCU, UCD and University of Galway.

**Local YFG Branches** are branches of YFG within Dáil constituencies and include members who may not be in college or those who prefer to be active locally. These branches often work closely with their local Fine Gael representatives and are focused on issues within the community.

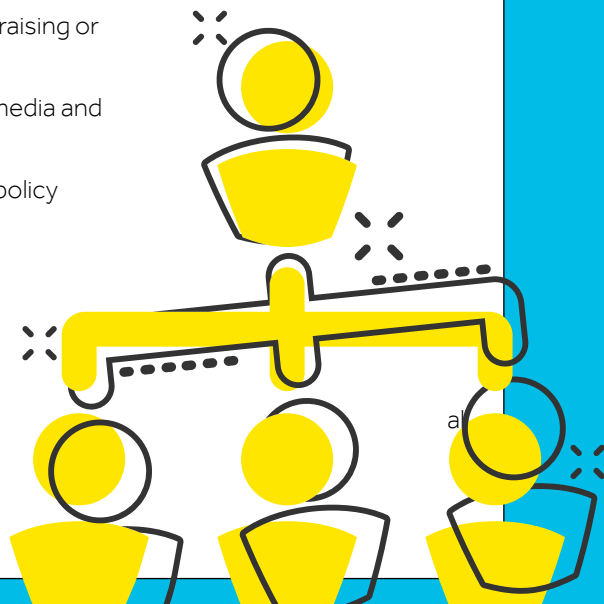
All YFG members are entitled to join one local branch and one college branch if they are in third-level education.

### Officer Board Roles

Each branch is run by an officer board or executive, elected by the members at the branch's Annual General Meeting (AGM). These roles are open to any member and are a great way to build leadership skills and contribute to the direction of your branch.

#### These roles include:

- **Chairperson** – Leads the branch and chairs the branch's meetings.
- **Secretary** – Handles communication, records minutes of meetings, and manages membership lists, including the re-affiliation of members each year.
- **Treasurer** – Manages the branch's finances, including any fundraising or event expenses.
- **PRO (Public Relations Officer)** – controls the branch's social media and designs posters or graphics for events.
- **Policy Officer** – Coordinates discussions and submissions on policy matters.
- **Campaigns or Events Officer** – Helps plan canvassing and social events.
- **Youth Officers** - appointed by the YFG branch at an AGM. They serve on the Senior Party Constituency Officer Board and are there to ensure that YFG's voice is heard across levels of the organisation and liaise with the YFG branch.



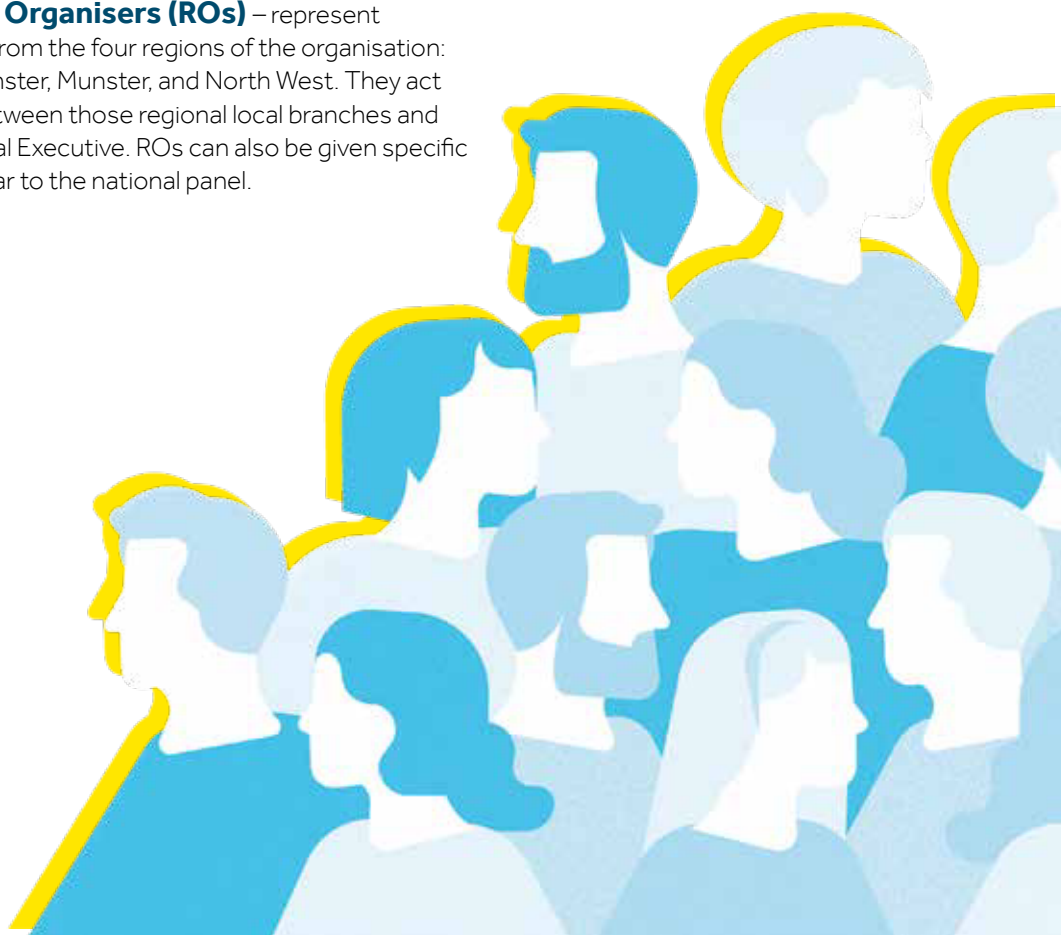
# The National Executive

Beyond branches, YFG is supported and led by an elected National Executive. This body oversees the direction of the organisation at a national level, connects branches across the country, and coordinates major events, campaigns, and the organisation's policy.

**What is the National Executive?** The National Executive is elected every 18 months to 24 months at the YFG National Conference, where members from all branches vote to select who will lead the organisation.

## It is made up of:

- **President** – Spokesperson for YFG nationally. They chair National Executive meetings and they represent the organisation at public and party events. They also have a seat on the Fine Gael Executive Council.
- **Vice Presidents** – two vice presidents, one male and one female, a versatile position to support the work of the National Executive and the President, who are often given specific portfolios in addition. Both vice presidents also have a seat on the Fine Gael Executive Council.
- **The National Panel** – four members that are given various different briefs like National Secretary, Branch Development, Recruitment, Communications, Campaigns, and other positions at the needs of the organisation.
- **Regional Organisers (ROs)** – represent members from the four regions of the organisation: Dublin, Leinster, Munster, and North West. They act as a link between those regional local branches and the National Executive. ROs can also be given specific briefs similar to the national panel.



# National Executive Portfolios

The president of YFG can assign portfolios to any member of the National Executive; portfolios are not set and can be what is most needed for that time. The only exception is that the president must appoint a national secretary.

**Some examples of portfolios are:**

**Policy**

Develop policy proposals, produce the annual Pre-Budget submission.

**Campaigns**

Design and run national campaigns and support branches with campaigns

**Branch Development & Engagement**

Strengthen branch structures, support new branches and promote branch collaboration.

**Women's Engagement**

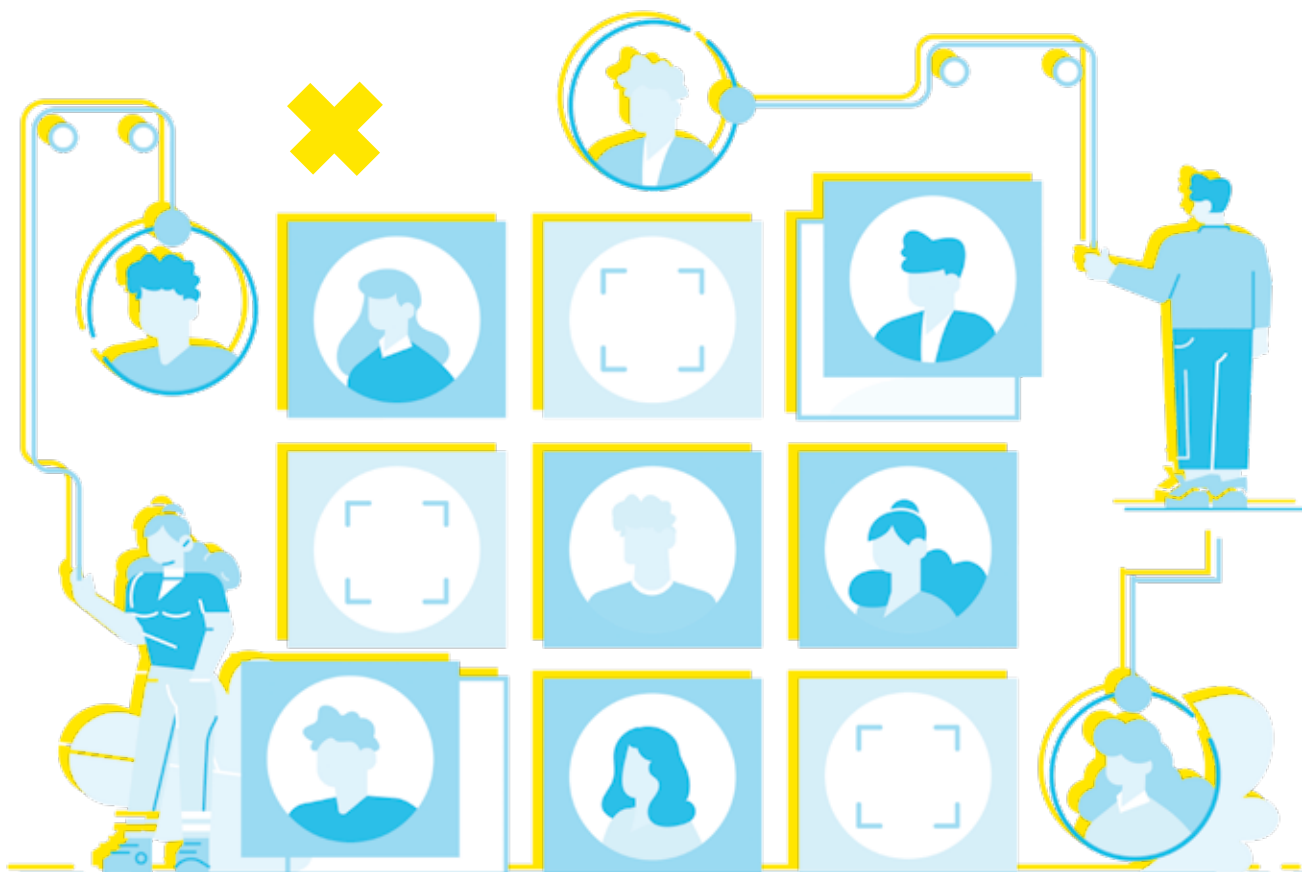
Increase women's participation in politics and promote gender balance within the organisation.

**Recruitment**

Lead the recruitment of new members, and coordinate with college branches and constituencies.

**Communications**

Manage social media, oversee branding, and assist branches with promoting YFG.



# Organisational Structure

## YFG's representatives on the Fine Gael Executive Council

**President**

**Female  
Vice-President**

**Male  
Vice-President**

## Young Fine Gael National Panel

Panel Member

Panel Member

Panel Member

Panel Member

Members take up an individual portfolio

## Young Fine Gael Regional Organisers

**Leinster**  
Regional  
Organiser

**Dublin**  
Regional  
Organiser

**Munster**  
Regional  
Organiser

**North-West**  
Regional  
Organiser

**Leinster**  
Regional  
Council

**Dublin**  
Regional  
Council

**Munster**  
Regional  
Council

**North-West**  
Regional  
Council

## Network and Committees

**Women's Net-  
work**

**International  
Committee**

**Second Level  
Network**

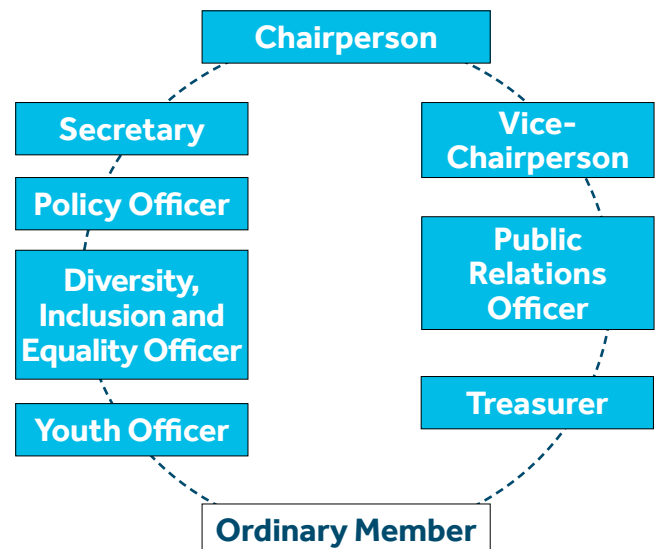
**One-Island  
Committee**

**Young Careers  
Network**

**Coiste na  
Gaeilge**

**Intercultural  
Network**

**LGBTQ+ Net-  
work**





# Getting Involved

Joining YFG opens the door to a wide range of exciting opportunities, whether you're passionate about politics in general or simply want to meet like-minded people. Getting involved is the best way to make the most of your membership and shape your experience within the organisation.

## ▶▶ **Attending Branch Meetings**

Your local branch is your first point of connection within YFG. Branch meetings are held at least once a year with an AGM, and they're open to all members but are generally most useful to those in the local area. At meetings, you'll hear updates from the officer board of the branch and elect an officer board but also nominate individuals as the YFG branch's youth officer, who will sit on the senior party constituency officer board, discuss current political issues, and plan upcoming activities. Many branches also take that time to organise charity events such as fun runs or coffee mornings. These gatherings are a great way to get to know other members in your own area, learn more about how YFG works, and get comfortable with the organisation at your own pace.

## ▶▶ **Attending Constituency Meetings**

Generally in a constituency there can be multiple branches of YFG; at least once a year all the branches are brought together to host their constituency AGM. Where branches can relay their local issues and concerns directly to the constituency. At these meetings, similarly to a branch meeting, events and goals are set, and a new officer board is elected for the year. Constituency meetings can be held at any time but have to be held at least once a year.

## ▶▶ **Campaigning: Canvassing and Leafleting**

YFG is an active campaigning organisation that plays a key role in supporting Fine Gael at the local and national levels. As a member, you'll have the chance to get involved in canvassing, going door to door with elected representatives or candidates to talk to residents and relay their issues back to the elected representative or candidate. You will also have the opportunity to go leaflet dropping in your community to inform the public about what their elected representative has achieved or what a candidate hopes to achieve. These activities are especially important during Local, General, and European elections, as well as referenda. This will help you build confidence and will give you insights into how politics works at a grassroots level.

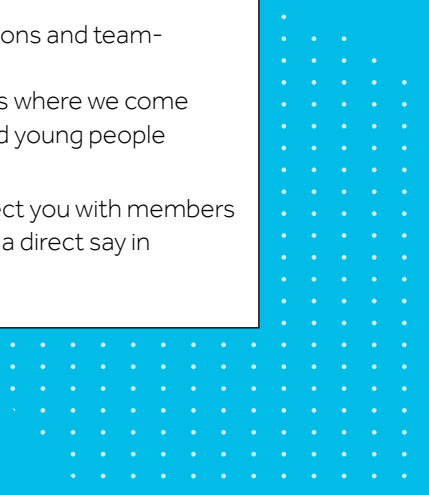
As well as this YFG runs our own independent campaigns, with recent campaigns including on the lack of student accommodation, supporting young farmers and our longstanding campaign for Cheaper Pints, Longer Nights.

## **Opportunities to Attend National Events**

(e.g., National Conference, Summer School) YFG organises several national events each year where members from across the country come together. These events include:

- **National Conference**, our biggest gathering, which features guest speakers from within or outside the party, policy motions, amendments to the YFG constitution and the election of the new National Executive and, of course, a social element too.
- **YFG Summer School**, an informal event combining panel discussions, YFG policy motions and team-building activities.
- Other events, like the **National Campaign Development Day** and other topical events where we come together to plan our next big campaign or discuss issues affecting the organisation and young people across the country.

Attending national events will give you a broader perspective on the organisation, connect you with members from other branches and constituencies from across the country, and allow you to have a direct say in shaping YFG policy and its constitution.



## Policy and Campaigns

### How Can Members Contribute to Policy?

Every YFG member can take part in shaping national policy. Here's how you can get involved:

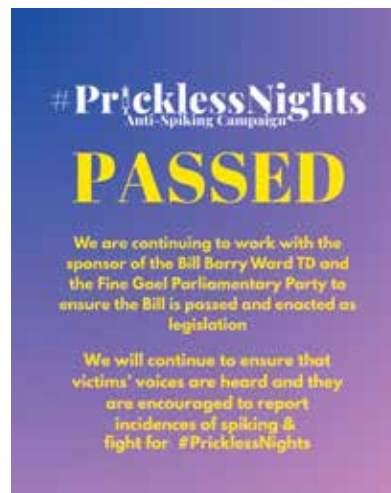
- ▶▶ **Submit a Motion** – Members can write and propose motions to their branch to be presented at a Summer School or National Conference, if accepted, that motion will become the policy of the organisation.
- ▶▶ **Submit a constitutional amendment** – Similarly to the above point, members can write and submit amendments to the YFG constitution to be presented by their branch at a National Conference, if accepted by a two-thirds majority of present delegates, the constitutional amendment will be adopted.
- ▶▶ **Join a Policy Committee** – YFG runs national policy committees focused on specific areas on issues such as international affairs, agricultural and rural affairs, and our annual pre-budget submission. These groups meet online and in person to research issues, and draft policy documents, which we then present to the relevant Minister or Spokesperson.
- ▶▶ **Take Part in Policy Days & Consultations** – Throughout the year, YFG hosts events where members discuss key issues with Ministers, TDs and Senators.

## Spiking Bill

Over the last number of years YFG have been advocating for the passage of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person (Amendment) (Spiking) Bill 2023, which seeks to make spiking a standalone offence with a maximum prison sentence of up to 10 years. This legislation was written by Young Fine Gael and shows the effect that we have as an organisation, being the only youth wing to have our own legislation pass through Seanad Éireann.

We have remained steadfast in our commitment to tackling the issue of spiking and ensuring that meaningful legal protections are put in place for victims.

We are determined to see this legislation enacted. However, most importantly, we remain unwavering in our commitment to ensuring that victims' voices are heard, that their experiences are recognised, and that they feel supported and empowered to report incidence of spiking.



## What Can YFG Offer You?

### How Can Members Contribute to Policy?

YFG can offer so much to members, like policy development, career opportunities and a space to make long-lasting friends.

Here's what you can get by being a member:

#### Representation & a voice for young people

- Be part of a youth organisation with direct links to Fine Gael leadership and Government.
- Represent your branch at the National Conference, vote on motions, and elect the National Executive.

#### Networks, Committees and Forums:

YFG connects members through a growing set of national networks. These include:

- **Women's Network** – a network focused on creating safe and empowering spaces for women in politics and supporting gender equality.
- **LGBTQ+ Network** – a space for LGBTQ+ members and allies to share experiences and promote inclusivity.
- **International Committee** – where they work on behalf of YFG with colleagues in the Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP), organise their own internationally focussed campaigns, and create policy for YFG on International and Defence matters..
- **Second Level Network** – A place for second-level students in YFG to connect and discuss the issues most pressing to second-level education.
- **Intercultural Network** – this network's goal is to better represent different cultures in YFG and provide a space for those members to connect.
- **Young Careers Network** – This is a network that provides information and career opportunities about careers in politics and related areas for members.
- **Pre-Budget Submission Committee** – a group that drafts YFG's pre-budget document that is filled with submissions from across the organisation. This document is presented to the Minister for Finance or Public Expenditure annually.
- **One Island Committee** – The committee develops YFG policy on shared-island relations and promotes informed discussion about the future of our island.

#### Social Events & Friendships

- Make lifelong friends at Summer School, National Conference, and Local events.
- Enjoy local branch socials like pub quizzes and nights out.

Many members say the best thing about YFG isn't the politics, it's the craic.

# FAQs

## Do I have to go to every meeting?

Nope. Come and go as you please, there's no pressure. Attend what interests you and get involved at your own pace.

## What should I bring to my first meeting?

Just yourself. There's no formal dress code or preparation needed. If there's a topic or guest speaker, your branch will usually let you know in advance.

## Can I help out without being on the Officer Board?

Absolutely. You can volunteer at events, help with graphics, give campaign ideas, just let a member of the office board know you're interested.

## How do I hear about national events or updates?

Keep an eye on our WhatsApp community for the latest updates. Make sure to follow @youngfinegael on Instagram and check your email regularly for news from your branch or the national executive. Most events are open to all members, so don't miss the chance to get involved and have your voice heard.

## What if I'm nervous or don't know anyone?

That's totally normal; everyone starts somewhere. Branches are welcoming, and officers will help introduce you.

## What do I wear to a national event?

Smart-casual works for big events like conferences. Summer School is chill, hoodies, trainers, whatever you're comfortable in. If there's a formal dinner, you will be told in advance.

## What if I'm new to politics?

Completely fine. Most people are when they first join. Come along to events and learn as you go.

## How do I run for something in YFG?

Wait for your branch's AGM. You can nominate yourself for any Officer Board role, no experience needed, just interest. And if you want to run for the National Executive, wait until the next National Conference, usually every eighteen to twenty four months.

## What's a motion?

A motion is a proposal for policy in YFG, debated and proposed at a National Conference or Summer School. Any member can write a motion, which can then be submitted through your branch. This is how YFG shapes its policy.

## What's canvassing like?

You go door-to-door talking to voters about their issues. You won't be alone, and you're not expected to debate; just be friendly and inform their Fine Gael public representative or candidate about their concerns.

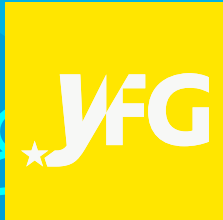
## Are events expensive?

Most branch events are free or low-cost. National events like conferences are ticketed, but it's a great deal for a weekend away!

## Can I go to events outside my branch?

Yes, You're welcome at any YFG event, even if it's hosted by another branch or region.





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