



NORTHERN IRELAND YOUTH FORUM CONSTITUTION

As amended and adopted at an AGM held on 20th September 2014

1. NAME

The name of the organisation shall be the Northern Ireland Youth Forum. Fóram Óige Thuaisceart Éireann (Irish Language) and Norlin Airlan Younglins Collogue (Ulster Scots) will also be used in official documentation. For the purpose of this Constitution the organisation will be called the Youth Forum.

2. OBJECTS

The Northern Ireland Youth Forum exists to inspire, motivate, empower and support young people to have a voice and effect change on personal; peer; community and societal levels. The Youth Forum is established to promote the voice and benefit of young people; primarily in Northern Ireland; and also within the Republic of Ireland; Great Britain; Europe and further afield [1] (hereinafter called the "area of benefit") and to educating and supporting such young people through their leisure time activities, so as to develop their physical, mental and spiritual capacities, that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society and that their conditions of life may be improved [2].

2.1 In furtherance of the above objects the Youth Forum may:

- 2.1.1 provide or secure the provision of educational and recreational facilities and practical assistance for young people within the area of benefit.
- 2.1.2 promote and carry out, or assist in promoting and carrying out research, surveys and investigations and publish the useful results therefore.
- 2.1.3 organise or assist in organising meetings, events, projects, training and debates and publish or assist in publishing reports, periodicals, recordings, books or other documents.
- 2.1.4 procure to be written and printed, published, issued, distributed and circulated reports, periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or other documents or communications in furtherance of the above objects.
- 2.1.5 obtain, collect and receive money by way of grants, donations, bequests, legacies or other lawful method, provided that the Forum may not engage in any form of permanent trading.
- 2.1.6 invest the monies of the Forum not immediately required for the furtherance of the said objects in or upon such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit, subject nevertheless to such conditions (if any) as may for the time being be imposed or required by law.
- 2.1.7 recruit and train volunteers with relevant skills to carry out the objects of the Forum.
- 2.1.8 employ or pay any person to supervise, organise and carry on the work of the Youth Forum and make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of remuneration to employees.
- 2.1.9 promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the above objects and to that end to work in association with the voluntary and statutory youth service (and other bodies), including local authorities and governments; voluntary organisations; and other partners across Ireland, GB and further afield engaged in the furtherance of the above objects in the area of benefit.
- 2.1.10 do all such other lawful things as may be necessary for the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1. The Youth Forum is a membership organisation and as such the membership structures are detailed below:

- Individual members;
- Affiliate members;
- Organisational Members;
- Executive committee;

3.1.1 Individual members

- (i) All young people aged 11 – 25, whose residence is in Northern Ireland are entitled to become individual members of the Youth Forum providing they fulfil the following criteria:
 - (a) They should be aged 11-25.
 - (b) They should actively support the values, priorities, aims and objectives of the Youth Forum.
 - (c) By completing relevant membership registration.
- (ii) Individual members have the opportunity to participate in all NIYF programmes and will be informed about these via a range of communications mechanisms.
- (iii) Individual members are not required to attend AGMs, but are invited to do so.
- (iv) Individual members are entitled to voting rights.

3.1.2 Affiliate members:

- (i) Affiliate membership is open to any young person, aged 11 – 25, who lives outside of Northern Ireland and have an interest the work of the Youth Forum; issues that young people face in the jurisdiction; and / or would like to become involved in Youth Forum project work, campaigns, events, seminars etc. Affiliate members are required to fulfil the following criteria:
 - (a) They should be aged 11-25.
 - (b) They should actively support the values, priorities, aims and objectives of the Youth Forum.
 - (c) By completing relevant membership registration.
- (ii) Affiliate members have the opportunity to participate in all NIYF programmes and will be informed about these via a range of communications mechanisms.
- (iii) Affiliate members are not required to attend AGMs, but are invited to do so.
- (iv) Affiliate members are not entitled to voting rights.

3.1.3 Organisational Members

- (i) Organisational Membership is open to local Youth Councils; Youth Forums; Youth Clubs; Schools; Community Groups; Regional Voluntary organisations or other relevant young people's organisation so long as they promote the participation of young people and that:
 - (a) They actively support the values, priorities, aims and objectives of the Youth Forum.
 - (b) They actively promote the participation of young people in decision making within their organisation.
- (ii) Each organisation must apply in writing to the Youth Forum by completing the necessary application process.
- (iv) Organisational members are entitled to a range of benefits based on the Youth Forum's programme of work at any particular time; e.g.:
 - (a) opportunities for joint lobbying; campaigns; events; projects etc;

- (b) reduced rates for training;
 - (c) benefit from support from NIYF staff where possible.
- (v) Organisational members are strategic partners of the Youth Forum and as such will be the Youth Forum's preferred option for partnership in the delivery of local; sub regional; regional; national or international projects.

3.1.4 Executive Committee

- (i) The Northern Ireland Youth Forum will be managed by an Executive Committee.
- (ii) The Executive Committee will be made up of no fewer than 12 and no more than 20 young people (aged 11 – 25) who will be drawn from the Youth Forum's membership. Executive Committee members will be elected on a bi-annual basis following a vote at AGM. The number of seats available on the Executive Committee will be agreed by the outgoing Committee based on numbers of nominations received, representation and strategic direction at that time.
- (iii) The Executive Committee are responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of NIYF. Whilst it is not a pre requisite that the Executive Committee is a fully representative group; the Youth Forum will be mindful of the makeup of the committee in terms of equality legislation.
- (iv) The Executive committee may if it wishes to, appoint up to 3 adult representatives to the committee; (usually defined as someone aged over 25 and therefore does not qualify to be a member of the Youth Forum).
- (v) The role of these individuals will be to support the young people in their roles.
- (vi) Adult representatives cannot act in the Chairperson, Vice Chair, Honorary Secretary or Treasurer capacity. They do not have a vote on organisational or strategic matters, but should provide input and advice.
- (vii) Adult representatives will be co-opted onto the Executive Committee, by the Executive Committee when in place. This approach will allow the NIYF to maintain its youth led status, but will also provide mechanisms whereby young people are supported in their roles as Executive Committee members.

4. MEETINGS

4.1 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

- 4.1.1 An Annual General Meeting of the Youth Forum shall be held at such place and time (not being more than 15 months after the holding of the preceding Annual General Meeting) as the Committee shall determine.
- 4.1.2 To hold an Annual General Meeting, or Extraordinary General Meeting, the Youth Forum needs at least 35 voting members represented, including two office-bearers.
- 4.1.3 Any Members who are not able to attend Annual or Extraordinary General Meetings and who send apologies to the Honorary Secretary are entitled to vote by proxy. Apologies can be received via written or electronic communications.
- 4.1.4 Members can contribute and vote at AGMs / EGMs via skype / FaceTime or other relevant media platform.
- 4.1.5 At such Annual General Meeting the business shall include the following:
 - (a) The election of members to serve on the committee. Committee elections normally take place every 2 years.
 - (b) The appointment of an auditor or auditors.
 - (c) The consideration of an Annual Report of work done by or under the auspices of the Committee.
 - (d) The consideration of the audited accounts.

(e) The transaction of such other matters as may from time to time be considered necessary.

4.2 ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 4.2.1 All Individual Members are entitled to stand for election to the Executive Committee.
- 4.2.3 All young people standing for a position on the Executive Committee must reside in Northern Ireland and be available to attend at least 70% of executive committee meetings (either in person or via video conferencing or other relevant platform).
- 4.2.4 All nominations for Executive Committee must be received at least three weeks before the AGM by submitting the relevant nomination form.
- 4.2.5 The election system used to conduct the count will be stated clearly in the election documentation, and can be a combination of either simple majority and single transferable vote for all positions as is deemed appropriate.
- 4.2.7 The Election process will be overseen by an independent Chairperson supported by a member of staff.

4.3 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICER BEARERS:

The following office bearers shall be elected at the A.G.M. to serve on the Executive Committee.

- 4.3.1 **CHAIRPERSON:** The Chairperson shall convene and chair meetings of the Youth Forum and its' Executive Committee. In conjunction with the Honorary Secretary, the Chairperson should liaise with staff. Additionally, the Chairperson shall be expected to represent the organisation at external events.
 - 4.3.2 **VICE CHAIRPERSON:** In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson shall be expected to carry out the duties of the Chairperson. He/she shall be expected to be in attendance at all meetings of the Youth Forum and its Executive Committee.
 - 4.3.3 **HONORARY SECRETARY:** The Honorary Secretary shall liaise with the employees to ensure that the general business of the Youth Forum and the Youth Forums office is being carried out properly. In addition he/she is permitted to be in attendance at regular staff meetings to ensure the above.
 - 4.3.4 **TREASURER:** The Treasurer shall be responsible for working with the staff to ensure that the Youth Forum has enough resources to fulfil its objectives. He/she shall produce a balance sheet to be presented at the AGM.
 - 4.3.5 **PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER:** The Public Relations Officer shall work with the nominated communications staff member in dealing with the local and national media outlets. He/she shall keep in close contact and meet with the local media, issue press releases and deal with other publicity articles.
 - 4.3.6 **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICERS:** External Affairs Officers will be involved in international; North South and East West initiatives. At least three External Affairs Officers will be appointed:
 - International Rep – who will be appointed to represent the Youth Forum Internationally and take seats on appropriate committees or projects.
 - North South Rep – who's role it will be to participate in, oversee, support and promote North South Youth Forum work.
 - East west rep – who's role it will be to oversee, support and promote East West Forum work such as UKYP and liaison with SYP; Funky Dragon; BYC etc.
- External Affairs Officers will form a small sub group, which may include members of other relevant fora or projects.
- 4.3.7 Further posts may be reserved for other young people.

- 4.3.8 Where Executive members need additional support to enable them to carry out their duties, the Youth Forum shall, where possible, employ the professional expertise to give guidance and advice.

4.4 FUNCTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Executive Committee will meet no less than four times per year. The Chair will be responsible for setting the agenda of these meetings through direct engagement with the Director, staff and members. The Executive Committee shall:

- 4.4.1 meet a minimum of four times per year. To hold a meeting of the Executive Committee there needs to be a third plus one of the Executive Committee members in attendance.
- 4.4.2 ensure the day to day running of the organisation and make any important decisions necessary.
- 4.4.3 support the Director in responsibility for the employment of, supervision of and support for staff, advising the organisation on financial matters and monitoring the programme to ensure the Youth Forum is meeting its aims and objectives.
- 4.4.4 actively support and promote the aims of the Youth Forum and the activities, work etc., of the organisation.
- 4.4.5 if required, discuss any matter relating to an employee. If the Executive Committee is required to do this and a member of it has been in anyway involved in the incident, he/she shall withdraw from the discussion. The Executive Committee should also refer to the Contracts of Employment relating to each particular post.
- 4.4.6 in relation to an individual's absence from two or more consecutive executive meetings without written apology (includes email, text, social media) consider co-opting an alternative into that post to carry out the duties that go with it for up to as long as is deemed necessary.
- 4.4.7 Where necessary the Executive Committee shall seek advice from professional experts in relation to financial, legal or strategic matters.
- 4.4.8 Each Executive Committee member is expected to serve the duties of their office for a period of two years.
- 4.4.9 The Executive Committee may appoint such sub-committees, advisory groups or working parties of their own members and other persons from time to time, necessary for the carrying out of their work and may determine their terms of reference, duration and composition. All such sub-committees shall make regular reports to the Executive Committee. No sub-committee shall make any decisions without this going to the full Executive Committee.
- 4.4.10 Members of the Executive committee are expected to act with integrity and within the ethos of the Youth Forum. It is required that as such Youth Forum strategy and policy comes before any other interest outside of the work of the Youth Forum. Committee members are required to ensure the organisation remains non party political. Should any conflict of interest hamper an individuals role as an Executive Committee member they will be expected to reconsider their position. Executive committee members who do not adhere to these points; and / or the Executive committee standing orders may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

4.5 OUTSIDE COMMITTEES

- 4.5.1 The Youth Forum shall elect members/associate members to serve on certain outside committees as deemed necessary or in line with the work of the organisation.
- 4.5.2 Each member who represents the Youth Forum on outside committees shall put forward the views of both the young people and the Youth Forum; participate to the best of their ability in the work of the outside committee and report back to the Youth Forum by way of a short written or verbal report about the committees work.
- 4.5.3 The involvement of members on outside committees should be reviewed on a yearly basis.

4.6 REQUIREMENTS/FOOTNOTES

- 4.6.1 Each Executive committee member who attends an external committee or working group submit written minutes/reports of all meetings to Head Office two weeks after the particular meeting has taken place.
- 4.6.2 These written minutes/reports will be available for members to read and only important points are to be raised at Youth Forum meetings.
- 4.6.3 All Executive Committee members; Youth Forum sub committees and representatives on outside committees are required to submit a review of work completed during the year at the A.G.M.
- 4.6.4 All Youth Forum committees will have the power to co-opt people onto the particular committee, if the members of the committee decide that this would be beneficial.
- 4.6.5 If a member of the Youth Forum is in attendance at a conference/seminar, meeting, youth exchange, study tour etc. this person must submit a report (verbal or written) to the NIYF Executive Committee no later than two months from the date they return. If for personal reasons this is not feasible, a time extension should be sought through the appropriate committee. Failure to do this may result in no place being offered to that person for future visits, trips, etc.

5. YOUTH FORUM EMPLOYEES

- 5.1 The Youth Forum shall employ such staff as deemed necessary to support the voluntary members of the organisation and the work of the Youth Forum.
- 5.2 The employees will be expected to fulfil all the duties detailed in their job descriptions with the minimum amount of supervision from the Executive Committee.
- 5.3 The Employees shall be based at the Youth Forum Office or other satellite office, although will be expected to travel, when necessary, in order to discharge their duties.
- 5.4 This is only a brief outline regarding employees. For full details on each post, members should refer to the individual job description and contract for that post.

6. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 At the A.G.M. of the Youth Forum a Treasurer shall be elected who will have the overall responsibility to ensure that the organisation remains in a healthy financial situation.
- 6.2 The Youth Forum will hold a Current / Saving Account / Accounts with a bank authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority, and entered on the Financial Services Register with branches based in Belfast; into which grant-aid shall be paid to cover ESSENTIAL running costs eg., salaries, travel expenditure, meeting expenses, office accommodation etc. Money which is received to help offset these costs shall also be lodged into this account.
- 6.3 The Youth Forum will hold a Current / Savings Account with a Building Society authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority, and entered on the Financial Services Register with branches based in Belfast; into which money received from fundraising activities and other sources may be lodged. This money will be used to finance projects, which the Youth Forum decide to undertake.
- 6.4 Payments/Expenses can only be made on invoices in connection with Youth Forum events/activities. No invoices may be paid without an office bearer's approval. In the case of credit cards, and in order to facilitate the seamless running of the organisation, the director will sign these off in the first instance and then an office bearer will co-sign after the purchase.

- 6.5 Any two of the following four people are authorised to sign cheques on behalf of the organisation: Chairperson, Honorary Secretary, Treasurer and Director. No person may sign cheques made out to themselves as the named beneficiary.
- 6.6 The Youth Forum shall submit its accounts for audit on an annual basis by a registered Chartered Accountant.
- 6.7 The Audited Accounts must be submitted annually to relevant funders.

7. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 7.1 *Any alterations to this Constitution shall receive the assent of a **simple majority of the voting members of the Youth Forum present at EGM / AGM** (In accordance with section section 4.1 of this document); specially called for the purpose PROVIDED THAT notice of any such alteration shall have been received by the Honorary Secretary in writing not less than 21 clear days before the meeting at which the alteration is to be brought forward.*
- 7.2 *At least 14 clear days notice in writing (including electronic communications) of such a meeting setting forth the terms of the alteration to be proposed shall be sent by the Honorary Secretary to each member of the Youth Forum. PROVIDED FURTHER THAT no alteration shall be made which would cause the Forum to cease to be a charity at law.*


8. DISSOLUTION

- 8.1 *If the Committee by a simple majority decide at any time that on the grounds of expense or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Youth Forum they shall call a meeting of **all members of the Forum who have the power to vote** of which meeting not less than 21 days notice (stating the terms of the Resolution to be proposed thereat) shall be given.*
- 8.2 *If such decision shall be confirmed by a simple majority of those present and voting at such meeting the Committee shall have power to dispose of any assets held by or in the name of the Youth Forum.*
- 8.3 Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions have objects similar to the objects of the Youth Forum as the Committee may decide.

9. INDEMNITY

The Forum shall indemnify and keep indemnified every officer, member, volunteer and employee of the Forum from and against all claims, demands, actions and proceedings (and all costs and expenses in connection therewith or arising therefrom) made or brought against the Forum in connection with its activities, the actions of its officers, members, volunteers, or employees, or in connection with its property and equipment EXCEPT THAT this indemnity shall not extend to liabilities arising from wilful and individual fraud, wrongdoing, or wrongful omission on the part of the member sought to be made liable. The Treasurer shall effect a policy of insurance in respect of this indemnity.

Signed:  (Chairperson)

Signed:  (Honorary Secretary)