



## NIYF AGM 2020

### Executive Committee Nomination Bios

Please use this document to choose who you would like to vote for at our AGM.

#### Leo Sargent

My name is Leo Sargent and I want to be on the executive committee because I am good at taking charge, producing ideas, meeting new people, commanding and I am sensible although at times I can be good crack to hang out with. And my mum is part of the green conservatives in NI and so I want to be just like her in doing something for my community of young people, I am quite sporty and I support Newcastle United and my motto in life is, 'When the going gets tough, the tough gets going.' I am good in school and I am in the top year 9 class in Ashfield Boys High School, I love to play games like call of duty and guitar hero. I also like playing rugby.

#### Sofia Anderson

Hi, I am Sofia aged 11 from Ballymena. I would like if you could take two minutes to help me get elected to the NIYF Executive Committee. As an 11-year-old I feel my voice and the voice of others 11–13-year-olds is normally underrepresented and not often heard. I feel we are just as important and need to be heard as anyone and this is underpinned by Article 12 of the UNCRC rights of the child.

I am a confident young person willing to challenge and ask the right questions of people in power, I willing to learn from others to help develop the work and profile of Northern Ireland Youth Forum in Ballymena and across the country.

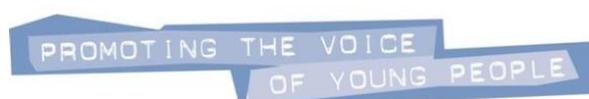
Please take two minutes to vote for Sofia Anderson to represent the voice of young people.

#### Ruairi McBride

Hi I am Ruairi, I am seventeen years old and currently studying Art, French and Politics at St Mary's CBGS in Belfast. Politics and social justice are major interests of mine and have led to my involvement with many community-focused programmes with Colin Youth Development Centre, such as intergenerational programmes run in partnership with Kilwee Carehome and sustained collaboration with the Shpresa programme in London, which focused on an international leadership project. These various schemes not only fine-tuned my team working and public speaking skills, they sparked my interest and a fire was lit inside of me to continue to help improve my community, not only on a local level but Northern Ireland as a whole. I believe it is this deep-rooted desire to better our community and society around us that a NIYF executive committee member must have, thus exactly why I am perfect for the role.

#### Max Kiernan

I am a 16-year-old A level student at Methodist College Belfast. I have a strong interest in the subjects I study including Politics and Business studies and like many young people hope for a future for Northern Ireland where I can get a good job and contribute to a healthy society. I am concerned about the disparity in education and declining mental health that can be seen amongst our youth. I feel that the current Northern Ireland Assembly is failing us, constrained as it is by entrenched sectarian politics. Acceptance of diverse political beliefs and the right to live freely in our society regardless of gender, sex, or religious beliefs should be highly encouraged. I feel these elements bring positive strengths to Northern Ireland, encouraging new thinking, new ideas and a strong voice for our young people. I am hard working, humorous and dedicated to working for the NIYF.



## **Cohen Taylor**

Hi, my name is Cohen and I live in Belfast. I'm standing for this role because I believe we need to stand up and fight for equality, peace and opportunity for all. I'm passionate about Integrating our education system and will strongly advocate for it. I've had the privilege of an Integrated Education myself and I believe it is essential that we learn together in order to build a shared future. I will fight for votes at 16 so we have our voices heard. I will fight to protect the rights of every LGBTQ+ young person within our society. In 2018 I was elected Chairperson of my school's Equality Alliance. I led Child Rights campaigns, I led Anti-Bullying campaigns and I marched to legalise marriage equality. In my free time I enjoy reading and acting. I will be honest with you, I will listen to you and I will advocate for you.

## **Niamh Mallaghan**

I hope to be re-elected onto the executive committee because I think that there is a lot more I can offer to the organisation. Through my work in multiple sub-groups, such as our mental health campaign, I've shown that I am extremely passionate about the voice of young people and I hope to continue to bring those voices into every opportunity that I can. I could also be an asset to the committee as someone with prior knowledge of the way it works, and due to my involvement with various campaigns within NIYF, which I can't wait to continue working on. Also, I love doing all the seemingly boring bits like administration, funding etc so I would be useful to have around to keep everything organised. Please consider giving me your vote and I will guarantee you get a dedicated, hard working and caring team player to help represent this organisation to the fullest.

## **Grace Cavanagh**

My name is Grace Cavanagh, I'm a 17-year-old A-level student from Derry studying Politics, English and Spanish at Thornhill College. I have a long-standing interest in international affairs, so I have been learning four extra languages and also have experience with public speaking. I work in my local Spar and volunteer at a rehab centre, which has shown me the diversity within my community. I believe in and try to live by the motto 'Justice for All', but the current state of Northern Ireland is systemically unjust. Sectarianism is built into the core of society, open discussion of mental health and freedom of self-expression is still heavily stigmatised, the poor and disabled are scrutinised and denied their benefits while the corrupt wealthy can buy a defence. Highlighting these issues is the start of effecting change. I will bring energy, commitment and determination to representing my peers in such social issues.

## **Ryan Harling**

We all share a common concern for our futures - overcoming barriers and reaching strong youth employment, positive wellbeing, quality education, and much more. As an experienced leader in student activism, I am seeking election to the NIYF Executive Committee to offer my knowledge, skills, and drive in working towards this amazing organisation's vision.

My track record:

- Developed a national campaign that pressured Stormont to provide health and social care students £2000 each in recognition of their efforts throughout the pandemic.
- Lead and secured funding for the pilot of a campus Wellbeing Garden
- Convinced university accommodation providers to include an Irish language flat option on application forms based on student feedback.

My priorities (elaborated in the attached posters)

- Push for Mental Health education in secondary school curricula.
- Lobby politicians in increasing the number of Integrated Schools.
- Amplify our lobbying voice.
- Increase engagement.

## **Eoin Millar**

Heya, I am Eoin Millar, I currently study History, Politics and Finance at St Mary's CBGS along with that I have been chosen to be the next deputy Head-Boy. I am going into my second year of studies at A-Level there and thoroughly enjoy the content. Through School & Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children & Young People, I have spoken alongside those with a voice to better raise their issues, because of those memberships I have got to meet with Ministers to International Civil Servants and discuss the view of Young People effectively and efficiently.

I volunteer with Young People at my local Scouting Association section, from there I have learnt leadership capabilities and being able to have a discussion across a wide age range. I am a well organised and motivated person who loves to participate in social campaigns close to my values.

Thank You, Eoin

## **Kay Laverty**

### **Background**

- Student finishing A levels - hoping to do politics and English in uni
- Belfast, 19 y/o
- Activist since 2018/19, have worked in activism with UKSCN, YCANI, XR, FFF
- documentary making
- Artist
- Writer

### **Reasons to cast a vote for me**

- Experienced in representing a group in a professional setting
- Public speaking - Belfast science festival (2020), SECA QUB conference speaker, (2021) panel member of local Amnesty conference (2020), interviewed for a Ted Talk (2020)
- Leadership qualities and organisation learned while establishing the activism group YCANI
- I am passionate about working on projecting youth voices in NI
- I have been an environmental and mental health activist for 3 years

### **Motto in life**

- 'dont panic' - Douglas Adams

### **Skills/Qualities**

- Organisation
- Leadership
- Experience
- Dedication to projects

### **Values/focuses**

- Holding authority accountable
- Giving young people a voice in decision making
- Youth homelessness
- Mental health
- Feminism
- Anti-racism
- Climate change
- LGBTQ+ rights

### **Kaitlyn Eadie**

My name is Kaitlyn Eadie and I live in Newtownards, Co.Down. I am a dedicated sailor and part of the RYANI Youth Forum. As Junior Vice Commodore at Donaghadee sailing club and a member of the RYANI YF, I sought to include more members, give support and encourage the young people whom are our future. I've learnt good leadership and team working skills and work hard to play my role as part of a group. I am a caring person, committed, passionate, fast thinking, with good communication skills and an interest to get things done. I am an ardent supporter of education and support for mental health issues. I have an interest in change and I am eager to get things done. I follow the belief that young people should be listened to, respected and have a voice. My motto is: Try again, if you don't succeed, don't give up; work harder.

### **Kate Lynch**

Hi, I'm Kate-18 from the Cliftonville area. I have many interests such as reading, volunteering and music, which I've been committed to for 11 years now. I am also an ambassador for a national youth orchestra and volunteer for two different youth services. I have a unique perspective about what young people care about, and qualifications to prove this.

Many describe me as a warm-hearted, kind and nurturing person, as I believe hard work and dedication is essential to succeed in changing NI for the better. I live by the motto that 'to define is to limit', and that's the type of attitude I would bring to the Youth Executive. I want to tackle issues such as: climate change, mental health and education inequalities in NI; creating more diversity, inclusivity and equality for all. If elected I want to challenge those who limit equity in NI through passion and dedication.

### **John Kane**

I'm 15 years old from Belfast, with a strong interest in local politics. The Youth forum allows young people in Northern Ireland to promote youth policies and raise concerns from young people. I would be honoured to be elected to the NIYF Executive Committee and to actively participate and lead the process of having young people's voices heard in our schools, communities and local government. I am a member of the NICCY youth panel and the Belfast City Council Youth Forum. Whilst not all young people want to actually be involved in local government or policies, all of our views should be considered and it is imperative that someone is there to promote youth views and opinions in developing change in our community. I want to do that and to make a positive difference in our community for young people. I hope this has convinced you to vote for me.

### **Ethan Redmond**

Hi, I'm Ethan, I'm from Northern Ireland. I would love to make a difference for young people like myself in a range of subjects from disability awareness, LGBTQ+ Rights, Mental Health & Suicide Awareness. It saddens me that in today's society we use labels to categorise people, I think this is very unfair & would want this to stop happening. I love being able to advocate very highly on issues that need more recognition & work done. I think people should vote for me as a young person growing up having special needs & mental health, I have seen how people are treated & don't want young people to feel that their opinions & views don't matter anymore so I would love to make things right together to hold those people accountable who say they are going to make changes to our society but never do. This is our future!

## **George Poots**

My name is George Poots, I am 17 years of age and I am putting myself forward for election to the executive committee of Northern Ireland Youth Forum. Youth work has always been my passion, ever since I was little, I have always sought out the ability to speak truth to power. I have worked on projects like NICCY's mental health charter, and I helped to bring the still waiting report to Stormont. I worked with YCANI and UKSCN on the youth climate strikes from 2019 onwards and I've worked with NIYF's environmental subgroup. Youth work is crucial in this current time of struggle and I want to continue to bring what I can to the table to bring whatever positive change I can. Malala herself said it best "I raise up my voice – not so I can shout but so that those without a voice can be heard".

## **Oisín-Tomás Ó Raghallaigh**

My name is Oisín-Tomás, please vote for me. I am passionate about empowering young people to be the best they can be and ensuring their voices are heard by decision-makers. As current Vice-chairperson of NIYF, I:

- Engaged with MPs, MLAs, councillors, Boris Johnson, Secretary of State for NI, Speaker of the Assembly, Education Minister, Children's Commissioner, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and Assembly committees etc.
- Focused on/highlighted issues such as mental health, homelessness, environmental justice, peacebuilding, education, disability inclusion and COVID-19 policy, critiquing injustices and offering practical solutions.
- Led NIYF through the COVID-19 pandemic and its biggest funding changes in 50 years.
- Worked on three research projects into the pandemic's effects on young people.
- Advocated for NIYF to expand our geographical outreach, adopt transgender inclusive policies, include more international programs post-pandemic and create a mental health drop-in service (a work in progress).

## **Elise Morrow**

I believe I would be a good fit for the youth forum for a number of reasons. The first of these is I have a deep interest in Northern Ireland and its history. I take politics in school and try to stay up to date with all the issues in Stormont. I have interests in reading and writing and have been in my school's debate club for 4 years; this has sharpened my skills in public speaking and concisely explaining my perspective. Others would describe me as someone who is approachable, level headed and an inventive problem solver. I am also deeply passionate about creating a more fair society and am especially concerned about mental health. Finally I have previous experience working on the North Down and Ards Youth Forum branch along with helping create a survey for the centenary, giving me experience in the organisation.

## **Adam Crothers**

I am Adam Crothers, a 19-year-old studying History at Queens University Belfast. I've been a dedicated member of the Youth Forum for three years with over 100 hours of engagement. I have and will continue to be an excellent advocate for young people's voices. I have strong communication skills, speaking for the Youth Forum in Stormont Committees for Education and the Executive Office, to ministers like the Northern Irish Minister of State and to the press, in the form of radio interviews such as for the Nolan Show and a written statement for Belfast Live. Outside the Youth Forum, I volunteer to teach young people Ju Jitsu. What I value the most is helping people. I want to improve young people's lives and I believe together we can make change. I will champion young people's voices with a fierce determination to ensure we have a role in deciding our future.

**Becky Figueira**

My name is Becky Figueira, I am 24 years old and live in South Belfast.

I want to be selected for the Executive Committee so I can contribute to a better Northern Ireland through the power of YOUTH. I am passionate about bringing about equality for all, and while N.I. has made a lot of progress recently on this, there is still so much to do.

I am also motivated by 2 of the biggest issues we are currently facing - the mental health crisis and the climate crisis. The people in power are not doing enough to tackle these and together we can change that!

**Ellen Taylor**

Hi! My name's Ellen Taylor and I'm 15. Some of my main dreams/ passions within politics include integrated education, ending poverty and social justice issues such as sexism and racism. I also love acting and am a confident public speaker (though I probably speak too much). I think I am a good team worker and get on well with people too. I'd love to help others and make a difference through the youth forum and I will work extremely hard if elected. Thank you! Ellen

**Madison Murphy**

Hi, my name is Madison, I'm 16 from Newry. I am running for an executive position in the Northern Ireland Youth Forum because I want to promote and lobby for positive change led by the youth of Northern Ireland. I have a passion for Politics and am a very proud member of the SDLP youth and I am the climate change activist for my local youth branch. I am a determined, driven person who is passionate about: The Climate, LGBTQIA+ rights, mental health, reproductive rights, and education. These issues and many more affect young people the most. If we want to see real change, we need to be at the forefront. Following John Hume; "When people are divided, the only solution is agreement." We are the solution, and we can reshape Northern Ireland.

If you want to see real change led by young people of Northern Ireland, vote Madison Murphy.

**John Marcus**

I would like to be a youth representative because I feel that young people especially males do not get positive and fair representation and I feel that I could be a positive voice for them in my area.

I have always been active in representing my peers, I have been a class representative in my old school as well as being actively involved in tech as a student rep and a eco officer.

I feel like we should have more young people in positive roles as we are the future and we know what we need rather than adults dictating to us. This is a great chance for young people in a rural area for them to get their voices heard.

**Zac Taylor-Clarke**

Hi everyone my name is Zac and my pronouns are He/They and I come from far far away East Belfast. I'm a hardworking passionate and honest teenager that has a drive for scrutinising our politicians. My Family have said I'm intellectual and funny. So True:) Through my past experiences working with NICCY and the Belfast Youth Forum I've gained life skills; public speaking as I gave a speech to the United Nations Youth Envoy Jayathma Wickramnacke which unlocked a confidence within. "Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times but if you can only remember to turn on the light" - Albus Dumbledore. Hope describes my motto and through my own personal mental health struggle I clung to this. I want all children to know that I know. Mental health is serious it's real and I will fight for you everyday because voting for me gives you that voice.

### **Aoife Murphy**

Hi, I'm Aoife, I'm 15 and I'm from Newry. I would love to be on the executive committee as I think its an amazing thing were young people are really listened to and valued, I would love to be a part of that. I think that people should vote for me as I'm very passionate about human rights and politics and making a difference. I feel particularly strongly about mental health and youth education. I think that this would be the perfect place for me to represent the youth in my area. I also have experience working in a similar environment. I am one of 15 members from across the UK of the NSPCCs-young people's board, we are currently doing a lot of really great campaign work that we hope will really make a difference. From the board, I think that I could bring some great ideas to the committee.

### **Demi Laverty**

I have had a long history in youth work and am extremely passionate about what I do. I have worked my way up from nothing and want to help people in my situation do the same thing. I want to make change in my community and in my country as a whole. To help mould the minds of young people to become functioning, happy members of our society. To look out for the best interests of those who will inevitably lead our country in the centuries to come. I'm ambitious, driven and determined to do something... anything, to make my community a better place for my children and their children after that.

### **Caitlin Williamson**

Hi I'm Caitlin I'm from Ballymena and I would love to be in the youth executive to speak for people who can't do so I want to be able to make a change for outside Belfast as well as most change is based around Belfast. Youth work is the one thing I'll always love being apart of. I have done amplify with NIYF and found it amazing can't wait to see what else they can offer for me.

### **Jack Dalzell**

Hi, I'm Jack and I have been with NIYF for two years. I have been involved in the Ards and North Down Youth Council where I gained experience in council politics and in speaking to adults in power. I then went on to become involved in the Our Voices group where I presented to the Education and Executive Office Committee as well as participating in our political champions meetings. I was also involved in presenting to the Ad Hoc Bill of Rights Committee. As an Executive Committee member, I will strive to speak truth to power and make sure we as young people are heard in decisions that will affect us and decisions that will affect our future. I am passionate about the rights of young people and will ensure that young people will be consulted and listened to when making decisions.

### **Ciara Ní hUisceith**

My name is Ciara Ní hUisceith. I am 18 and have just left school. I have been part of the youth form for almost 2 years. Currently, I am part of the Translink youth form and a member of the Our Voices group. I am very passionate about politics, especially youth politics and activism. This opportunity would mean so much to me as it will allow me more opportunities and responsibility within NIYF. Politics is a career I could see myself in and at the age I am at the youth form is exactly where I would want to explore politics and youth work more. NIYF is a place I feel fully safe and comfortable to be myself, without feeling judged and I feel as though I could go to the staff with ANY issues; I would like to be part of that to make young people have their voices heard with decision makers.

Go raibh maith agat.

## Suzanne Bunting

My name is Suzanne and I am from Kids Together Belfast a charity that supports children and young adults with disabilities. My favourite things to do are listen to music, make up and using my voice. I also enjoy dancing and spending time with my family and friends, being creative and socializing. I want to take part in the NIYF executive because I want to make sure people with disabilities are represented and have their voice listened to. I think I would be good because I am a caring and kind individual and I love meeting new people and helping out when I can. I was head girl in my school showing that I can lead and work as part of a team and often helped out with the younger pupils showing my caring and supportive nature. My motto in life is to make sure everyone feels included.

## Nicole Parkinson-Kelly

**Vote Nicole PK FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Who am I?**

- Lifelong Disney Fan
- Fantasy Reader (First-Time Harry Potter Reader)
- Dog Owner
- Enthusiastic, Reliable, Driven
- Youth Ambassador - 8 years
- Student Leader/Human Rights Activist - 5 years

**My Passions**

1. Accessible and Inclusive Higher and Further Education
2. Increased funding for Mental Health services
3. Better Trans Healthcare/supports
4. Consultation is not the same as representation. Young people need to be at the table for decisions impacting their education and employment opportunities.

**Why me?**

I have organised and led campaigns, challenged politicians and worked with senior staff in organisations.

I sat on the UUSU Trustee Board which manages the finances and strategic direction of UUSU. I would love to bring these skills to NIYF.

Students voted for me because I listen and implement. You can trust me to action YOUR Ideas.

**My Journey:**

Euroscopa UUSU UNIVERSITY OF LUTON STUDENTS' UNION

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**Young People are not just the Future. We need to be heard NOW.**