



PRESS RELEASE

Date: Tuesday 23 September 2014
Contact: Alicia Toal
028 9024 4888 (office hours)/ 078 1683 5151
alicia.toal@voypic.org

JOINT PROJECT INVESTS IN CHILDREN ACROSS ISLAND OF IRELAND

VOYPIC (Voice of Young People in Care) is pleased to launch an exciting, new project that will add real value to work with children and young people across the island of Ireland. If you work with children and young people and want to quality assure that work from their perspective - then this is the opportunity for you.

The Investing in Children (IiC) Membership Scheme recognises and celebrates imaginative and inclusive practice. Membership is awarded to organisations that can demonstrate a commitment to dialogue with children and young people that leads to change. VOYPIC became a member of the scheme for the first time in 2009 and is currently the only organisation in Northern Ireland to hold that membership.

Now we are working with IiC and Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) Ireland to launch Investing in Children Ireland as a pilot project. This joint project will promote the participation of children and young people as partners in the design and delivery of services across the island of Ireland. During the pilot we plan to support 20 organisations to achieve membership of the scheme.

We launched the pilot project on 22 September in Belfast and on 23 September in Dublin. Now organisations working with children and young people are invited to find out more about the membership scheme most local to them.



Liam Cairns, Director of Investing in Children welcomed the new project

"I am delighted we have formed this partnership with VOYPIC and YAP.

We believe the Investing in Children Membership Scheme makes an important contribution to the continuing struggle to translate children's rights from rhetoric to reality. We look forward to learning from children, young people and colleagues about the new, imaginative ways the scheme will be used in Ireland.

We are also excited by the collaboration between our three agencies which we anticipate will be mutually stimulating and inspiring."

At the Belfast launch of the project, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, Patricia Lewsley-Mooney said

"Listening to and acting upon what children in Northern Ireland have told me has been central to my role as Commissioner for Children and Young People. I have been working with government departments and agencies to raise awareness of the need and benefits of participation to work towards embedding a 'culture of participation' in the decision making process right across government.

I welcome and congratulate VOYPIC, Investing in Children Membership Scheme and Investing in Children Ireland on this pilot.

The 'Investing in Children Membership Scheme' will complement the work of my office and can help to promote and enhance the participation of children and young people as partners in the design and delivery of services across all sectors in Northern Ireland."

Further details can be found at www.investingninchildren.net

- Ends -

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

VOYPIC is a charity working across Northern Ireland promoting the rights and improving the lives of children and young people cared for away from home. They may be living at home in care; with foster or kinship carers; in children's homes; in secure settings; or in supported accommodation. They may be preparing to leave care or be care leavers.

We support children and young people through a wraparound model of practice. This means that we respond to local, individual and changing needs to bring meaningful benefits.

At 30 September 2013, there were 2892 looked after children in Northern Ireland:-

- | | |
|--|------------|
| • In foster care | 2172 (75%) |
| • Placed at home with parents | 343 (12%) |
| • Residential care (children's homes) | 213 (7%) |
| • Other care (hospital, secure, intensive support) | 164 (6%) |

(Delegated Statutory Functions, including Corporate Parenting Report, Statistical Report 30 September 2013, Health & Social Care Board)