



ombudsman
do leanaí
for children

Brexit Steering Group

Information for Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Who are we?

The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) is an independent, statutory office. The OCO was set up in 2004 and has two main roles:

- to deal with complaints made by or for children and young people about the actions of public organisations;
- to promote the rights and welfare of children and young people under 18 years old living in Ireland.

The Brexit Project

In 2016, the UK voted to leave the European Union (EU). Negotiations about the UK's exit from the EU – commonly called Brexit – will begin this year. Northern Ireland will leave the EU with the rest of the UK and the border between the North and South of Ireland will remain. This new arrangement will bring a number of challenges and opportunities for children and young people on both sides of the border.

Working with the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), we want to make sure that children and young people on both sides of the border have a voice in these

negotiations and that their rights are not negatively affected.

The cross border youth event will take place in early November 2017.

We want to find out what issues arising from Brexit are of particular concern to young people and what they would like to say to those who will be part of the Brexit negotiations. We are also looking for their input into the organisation and running of a cross-border event.

Brexit Steering Group

The OCO and NICCY want to bring together a steering committee of approximately 20 young people – 10 from Northern Ireland and 10 from the South - to plan a cross-border youth event on Brexit. In the South, Foróige and the National Youth Council of Ireland are helping us with this.

The first meeting of the steering group will be held on **Saturday 1st July 2017 from 11am – 3pm** at the **Ombudsman for Children's Office on the first floor of Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1.**

If you would like more information about how to get to the office, please visit our website: <https://www.oco.ie/about-us/where-we-are/>

Follow up meetings will be agreed with the group but we are looking for people who can commit to at least one day per month between July and November 2017.

It is important to be aware that these meetings will be held alternately in Dublin and Belfast and the youth event in November will be held at a venue close to the border.

Commitment to Good Practice

In all our work with children and young people, the OCO is committed to good practice and to acting in the best interests of children and young people. Our work is informed by the OCO's child protection policy and our ethical guidelines for working with children and young people.

If an adult is unable to accompany your child in travel to the designated meeting place, (e.g. the [Ombudsman for Children's Office, Dublin on 1st July](#)) and you are satisfied that they are capable of travelling independently, please indicate this on the consent form attached.

If your child is travelling independently, the OCO or NICCY has Duty of Care for your child from the time they enter their offices for each meeting. If your child is accompanied by a parent/guardian or leader, then duty of care is not the responsibility of the OCO or NICCY.

The OCO and NICCY will not film or photograph young people unless we have consent to do so and the young people participating will not be named online.

The OCO and NICCY will not exchange image files or personal details of the young people participating in the steering group with other third parties for their own use.

Consent Request

We are seeking voluntary, informed consent from parents/guardians and assent from young people themselves to become a member of the Brexit steering group.

Please indicate on the attached Consent Form whether or not you give consent for your child to be a member of the OCO/NICCY Brexit steering group and take part in a number of meetings and in the cross border youth event.

If you do not give media consent, your child can still take part in the steering group and youth event.

There is also an Assent Form (*young person's version of Consent Form*) for your child to fill out. Details of where to return these forms are included on the forms themselves.

You or your child may withdraw consent at a later stage. However, as we expect that more young people will be interested in participating in the steering committee than we can accommodate, we would be grateful if you would let us know if this is the case as places may be offered to other young people.

Travel Reimbursement

It is important to note that the office cannot reimburse travel costs if there is no **proof of travel**. As such, we ask that all young people hold on to their receipts and give them to us at each meeting. In cases of Leap Cards, we ask that young people top up by a small amount and give us the receipt, or preferably to pay in cash on the bus/DART/LUAS and hand us the receipt.

Further Information

Lunch and refreshments will be provided for the steering group at all meetings.

If you have any questions about the Brexit project that we can help with, please contact [names and contact details]

If you would like to find out more about the OCO's work, please visit our website: www.oco.ie.

Thank you.