

### 3. STRUCTURE OF YOUTH INFORMATION NETWORK

This section provides an overview of the structure of the Youth Information network with attached chart. It explains the roles of:

- (A) Youth Information Centres/Youth Service;*
- (B) Department of Education & Science;*
- (C) National Youth Information Co-ordinator/Youth Information Resource Unit;*
- (D) National Youth Information Monitoring Committee (NYIMC);*
- (E) ERYICA – European Youth Information & Counselling Agency.*

#### **A. Youth Information Centres (YICs)/Youth Service**

At present, the national youth information network comprises 30 Youth Information Centres, which are located around the country. These Centres are administered at local level by a variety of voluntary youth organisations as an integrated part of locally based youth services. The youth organisations involved include CYC, Foróige, Galway Diocesan Youth Service, National Youth Federation members, and the YMCA. Some Centres are joint projects run by the Youth Service and the Vocational Education Committee (VEC).

In line with the aims and principles of youth information (as described in Sections 1 & 2 of the Induction Pack), Youth Information Centres provide a free, generalist, drop-in information service, in specially designed premises, to young people and those who work with them. Subjects covered include:

<i>Employment Matters</i>	<i>Organisations &amp; Clubs</i>
<i>Coping with Unemployment</i>	<i>Entertainment/Recreation</i>
<i>Careers</i>	<i>Travel at home &amp; abroad</i>
<i>Education &amp; Training</i>	<i>Health</i>
<i>Rights &amp; Entitlements</i>	<i>Voluntary Work</i>
<i>Sport/Leisure</i>	<i>Migration</i>
<i>Youth Work</i>	<i>Consumer Affairs</i>
<i>Accommodation</i>	<i>Legal Matters</i>
<i>Financial Matters</i>	<i>Family/Personal Problems</i>
<i>Local Community Services &amp; Facilities</i>	

## **Outreach**

In an attempt to make their services accessible to all young people, a range of outreach activities is also provided, bringing information to young people through information points, workshops, exhibitions, publications, schools/youth club work and local media. Particular emphasis is placed on work with disadvantaged young people.

*(For more detailed description of Outreach activities, see Section 12)*

Recognising that accurate information and the ability to source information is a prerequisite for participation and for access to services, facilities and opportunities, Youth Information Centres are committed to a pro-active approach to information provision and to the imparting of information skills.

## **Staffing**

Each of the Centres employs 1-2 full-time, professional members of staff. Many Centres also use temporary employment schemes or volunteers as the source of extra staffing. The majority of Centre Co-ordinators have a third level qualification in e.g. communications, librarianship, business studies, youth work, social work.

YIC staff work in close co-operation with other relevant voluntary and statutory agencies and refer young people to them when further information or specialist help is required.

## **B. Department of Education & Science**

The Department of Education & Science (Youth Affairs Section) provides core funding to Youth Information Centres from National Lottery proceeds.

## **C. National Youth Information Co-ordinator/Youth Information Resource Unit**

The Department of Education & Science also employs a National Youth Information Co-ordinator to co-ordinate and support the work of Youth Information Centres and to service the work of the National Youth Information Monitoring Committee (NYIMC).

The support services are provided to Youth Information Centres through the Youth Information Resource Unit, which is located in the Department and managed by the National Youth Information Co-ordinator.

These support services include:

- \* *Training;*
- \* *Consultancy / Advice;*
- \* *Forum for information practitioners;*
- \* *Information Clearing House;*
- \* *Publicity / Promotion;*
- \* *IT / Computer Support;*
- \* *Code of Standards / Assistance with Quality Review;*
- \* *Query Recording;*
- \* *Liaison / Representation;*
- \* *Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme.*

## **D. National Youth Information Monitoring Committee (NYIMC)**

The National Youth Information Monitoring Committee (NYIMC) advises the Department of Education & Science on the development of the youth information network and acts as the registration body for Youth Information Centres. The NYIMC is composed of representatives of the organisations involved in the delivery of youth information services, local Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and the National Youth Council of Ireland.

### **Terms of Reference**

The NYIMC Terms of Reference are, as follows:

*1. To advise the Department of Education & Science on*

- appropriate services, standards and support mechanisms*
- funding requirements*
- evaluation criteria*

*for Youth Information services in receipt of financial aid from the Department of Education & Science;*

*2. To propose to the Department, following such consultation as the Committee deems appropriate, development of, and improvements to, the network of Youth Information services and to be consulted by the Department prior to any extension of the network and in relation to proposals for the areas listed at (1);*

*3. To monitor the work of the National Youth Information Co-ordinator;*

*4. To act as the registration body for Youth Information Centres.*

## **E. ERYICA – European Youth Information & Counselling Agency ([www.eryica.org](http://www.eryica.org))**

ERYICA (European Youth Information & Counselling Agency) is an international non-profit-making association. It is composed of national bodies, non-governmental or governmental, which seek to guarantee the right of young people to full and reliable information, which promotes their autonomy and their active participation in a democratic society. At present, ERYICA has member organisations in about 20 European countries with national partners in more than 30 European countries. The NYIMC is the Irish member of ERYICA.

ERYICA has two main aims:

- *to ensure European co-ordination and representation in the field of youth information and counselling;*
- *to develop a European network of youth information and counselling services.*

ERYICA has activities and services in a number of areas. Where these coincide with the aims and priorities of the Council of Europe and the European Union, ERYICA seeks to collaborate closely with these inter-governmental bodies. The Agency publishes an *ERYICA Newsletter* 4-5 times a year in English and French, as well as reports of its seminars and training activities.

The Internet-based **INFomobil** service ([www.eryica.org/infomobil](http://www.eryica.org/infomobil)), developed by ERYICA partners, provides practical information on about 20 European countries. Designed for young people and those working with or for young people, it aims to make mobility-related information more accessible to them. The information provided about each country covers the following areas: *Education, Employment, Vocational Training, Accommodation, Cultural, Sporting & Leisure Activities, Youth Information Services, Social Services, Transport.*

### **European Youth Information Charter**

The European Youth Information Charter was adopted in Bratislava on 3 December 1993 by the 4th ERYICA General Assembly, after two years of discussion among the member organisations of the Agency. The Charter constitutes a set of guidelines for "generalist" youth information and counselling work. It has been signed and accepted by youth information and

counselling structures, as well as by public authorities, in a large number of countries. *See following page for copy of Charter.*

## EUROPEAN YOUTH INFORMATION CHARTER

*Adopted in Bratislava (Slovakia) on 3 December 1993  
by the 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the  
European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA)*

### PREAMBLE

In a society that is more and more complex, youth information and counselling play a role that is more important than ever in a young person's transition to adult life. Information and counselling can help young people to achieve their vocational and individual aspirations and can promote their participation in society as responsible citizens. Information should also widen the choices available to young people, promote the exercise of their autonomy, facilitate their mobility and help to make Europe a part of their daily life.

Respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms implies the right of young people to dispose of complete, understandable and reliable information on all the questions and needs that they express, giving them the widest range of choices without discrimination and free of ideological or any other kind of influence.

This right to information has been recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and in the Recommendation N° R (90) 7 of the Council of Europe concerning information and counselling for young people in Europe.

### PRINCIPLES

The following principles constitute guidelines for youth information services<sup>\*</sup>, which help to guarantee the right of young people to information:

1. Youth information services shall be open to all young people without exception.
2. Youth information services seek to guarantee the equality of access to their information for all young people, regardless of their situation, place of residence or social category.
3. The information available shall be exclusively based on the request or need expressed by the user and is independent of any other interest or concern. It should cover all subjects which interest young people.
4. Each user is received as an individual, and the response is adapted to the request.
5. There is free access to youth information services (no appointment is required).

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<sup>\*</sup> *In this Charter, the term "youth information service" includes services which combine information with counselling and/or support.*

6. Information and counselling are given in a way that respects the user's confidences and anonymity.
7. Information is free of charge.
8. The information offered is complete, impartial, accurate, practical and up-to-date.
9. Information is provided in a professional manner by staff trained for this purpose.
10. Every effort is made to ensure the objectivity of the information provided through the pluralism of the sources used.
11. The information distributed shall be independent and free of any ideological, political or commercial interest.
12. The use of sponsoring or paid advertising must respect the independence of the service and of the information provided.