

14. ADDITIONAL SERVICES

This section

(a) describes some of the additional services provided by Youth Information Centres;

(b) provides guidelines for the provision of these services.

Many Youth Information Centres offer additional services, which complement the information service. These services can be an excellent way of attracting young people to the Centre, allowing them to become more familiar with the service.

Examples of Additional Services include:

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Many Youth Information Centres offer a CV preparation and typing service.

Preparation Service

Many young people do not know how to correctly prepare a CV. When s/he calls to the Centre, initially, it is important to read through the draft CV with the young person. This will help identify any gaps or errors as well as incorrect layout.

It is often helpful to have sample CVs available, which a young person can use as a reference when compiling his/her own CV. There are many useful books on this topic e.g. *The New C.V. that Gets you Interviewed* by Áine Keenan (Wolfhound Press).

Typing Service

Each Youth Information Centre can decide locally the timeframe for the typing of the CV as well as the cost (e.g. 2 working days, 5 copies for £2.50).

Secretarial Services

Many Youth Information Centres offer a typing and photocopying service. This service may be offered to e.g.

- local youth and community groups who may wish to produce flyers or posters for their members;

- students who may need to have theses or projects typed.

It may also include the typing of advertisements for noticeboards. The level of provision of this service can be decided locally.

Small Ads

The provision of community noticeboards in your Centre can be a useful service for youth and community groups who wish to advertise their activities and services. Local people can also place small ads. about accommodation, employment and local services and events. Young people can use these notice boards to find this particular type of local information.

Internet Access

All Youth Information Centres have Internet access. Young people can use the Internet to find answers to their queries by accessing relevant websites. E-mail can be used to request information or to keep in touch with friends or family. The rules and procedures for the provision of this service can be decided locally.

Outlined are two approaches:

(a) Information Provision

Youth Information Centres may wish to offer Internet access for research or information purposes **only**. In this case, Centre staff may wish to be present to provide guidance and supervision so that the young person is helped to locate good quality websites containing up-to-date information.

(b) Public Internet Access

Youth Information Centres may wish to offer Internet access where young people can access their e-mail or 'surf' the Internet at their leisure.

The Internet is an extremely useful information tool when used correctly. However, in order to ensure that young people obtain the maximum benefit from the Internet, it is important that some rules and regulations for the provision of the service are implemented. These rules and regulations can be decided locally.

Some issues to be considered when drawing up policy for Internet use

- *Charges/ Fees:* Youth Information Centres provide a free service and, ideally, this should also be the case for Internet use. However, due to

- budgetary constraints, this may not be feasible. One suggestion could be to provide free Internet access for specific queries and charge a fee (e.g. £1 for 10mins) for 'surfing'.
- *Time Limits:* Internet access can become extremely popular. It is important that as many young people as possible are given an opportunity to access the Internet. A suggestion is to allow a maximum time of 40 minutes per person.
 - *Booking System:* This is recommended to avoid disappointment. People will then be aware of when the Internet is available and know that they are booked in. A useful tip is to only allow booking for two days at a time. This prevents people coming in on Monday and booking themselves in for the week – denying other people access to the Internet.
 - *Restriction on Websites:* With Internet access, monitoring what information young people are accessing in your Centre is more difficult. It is important to supervise Internet access by young people under 18 and to make it clear that accessing inappropriate websites will not be tolerated. It can be difficult to provide supervision at all times. It may be necessary to have some type of security system such as *NetNanny*. These are not ideal, however, as they can restrict innocent websites such as nursing websites.
 - *Viruses:* It is imperative that, when making your computers available to the public, you have a Virus Checker (e.g. Norton Antivirus) that is updated **regularly**.
 - *Training:* Showing young people how to access information correctly and how to make the distinction between good and bad websites is essential. However, this training is specialised and very time consuming. Does the Co-ordinator have the time or the skills? This is a consideration when offering Internet access.
 - *Other Suggestions:* Where possible, allocate one Internet terminal for accessing information ***only*** and not for 'surfing' or e-mail. This computer could also hold other packages such as *Careernet*, *ECCTIS* or the *Citizens Information Database*. Remember the primary role of a Youth Information Centre is as an information provider and not as an Internet Café.

Internet Access is an excellent way of attracting young people into your Centre. However, as outlined, it is important to explore the issues involved and to decide on a policy before this service is offered.

ID Memberships

There are many cards available to the young person providing identification, membership or discounts.

Generally, Youth Information Centres are agents for the following:

International Youth Card (IYC) Under 26 Cards

Available to anyone under 26 whether a graduate, jobseeker, trainee or simply someone interested in travelling. The IYC card entitles the young person to discounts and benefits in a range of outlets, from leisure centres to theatres and cinemas. If a young person obtains an IYC Travelstamp (optional £7), they can avail of up to 50% discount on Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail) fares.

For further information on how to become an agent and the procedure for issuing the IYC card contact *IYC Section, USIT NOW, 19/21 Aston Quay, O'Connell Bridge, Dublin 2. Tel. 01- 602 1600.*

An Óige Membership Card (recognised internationally)

An Óige is the Irish branch of Hostelling International and, as a member, a young person can stay in many hostels in Ireland and abroad. Membership can be granted to anyone who has an address here in Ireland, no matter what age.

For information on how to become an agent and the procedure for issuing the cards contact *An Óige, 61 Mountjoy St., Dublin 7. Tel. 01- 830 4555*

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

Some Youth Information Centres are also agents for the International Student Identity Card (ISIC). This card is for those in full-time education (second or third level) and offers discount on travel and other services much like the IYC card.

For further information on how to become an agent and the procedure for issuing the ISIC card contact *IYC Section, USIT NOW, 19/21 Aston Quay, O'Connell Bridge, Dublin 2. Tel. 01- 6021600*

Passport Photographs

Some Youth Information Centres have a passport photograph booth that young people can avail of when they need photographs for passports or other forms of identification.