



**NIYF Briefing Summary
To Education Committee
RE: Education Bill; February 2013**

Background:

The Northern Ireland Youth Forum is the only Youth Led regional body, in the North of Ireland, tasked with involving young people in the decision and policy making process.

Led by a management committee of 17 young people who are elected from NIYF's membership (currently over 3,000 young people). The Youth Forum engage in over 30,000 young people per year in capacity building; lobbying; advocating; effecting social change at community; issue based and other work on local authority, regional, national and international levels.

Abstract:

NIYF Welcome the fact that education is being looked so seriously; and that changes in legislation can potentially do transform the design, delivery and development of the education system.

The draft legislation refers to young people aged up to 19 years old. According to the results of the 2011 census 26.56% of the Northern Ireland's population are aged under 19.

This considerable proportion of the population should not be excluded from the design, delivery and development of Education in NI.

Education is one of the most important issues to young people in the North of Ireland yet their voices are often overlooked in major policy discussions.

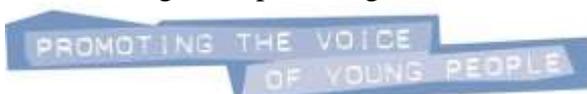
If we accept that the Education System should prepare young people for work and life; that there is an onus on the Department for Education to ensure that every school really is a good school; and that we create an environment where young people flourish and feel valued; surely young people are best placed to advise?

When we look at some of the best education systems in the world and look at various academic studies we can see evidence how we need a radical look at the system and address current educational inequality.

In other countries education is delivered on a more holistic way where pupils are not seen as simply the passive recipients of a service but active participants in its design and delivery.

ESA legislation needs to be more definite in terms of involving the voices of young people directly. This should not be simply aspirational or optional – the Education Bill needs to include legislation to describe how young people will have a direct link to the minister and his or her department.

Citizenship, Participation and Democracy are key parts of the curriculum. We believe that these things are caught not taught and by having a more participative education system we can achieve the goal of providing the best education to children and young people.



Key Points for consideration:

The Northern Ireland Youth Forum would like to raise the following concerns:

- Clause 28 outlines a duty to consult with some stakeholders but there is no duty to consult with young people themselves - who are the key stakeholders
- The lack of reference to the Youth Service given the fact that the 1989 Youth Service Order will be repealed

NIYF would put forward the following proposal for consideration:

- Clause 39 – an amendment on the makeup and appointment of Boards of Governors. NIYF would propose that legislation is put in place to ensure that there is a place (or places) on all Boards of Governors for young people should they want to take this;
- An amendment to Schedule 1 Clause 2; for the inclusion of young people on the Board of ESA
- Further engagement with young people should take place on potential schools council legislation
- Legislation to put in place provision for a ‘sectoral body’ which represents the views of young people directly to the Minister and their department