Access All Areas

A Diversity Toolkit
for the Youth Work Sector

Promoting Equality and Inclusion

A self-assessment Toolkit for youth leaders to assess the level

of equality and inclusion in their programmes...

... with practical tips on how to make youth organisations fully

inclusive for all young people

How to get started

NYCI National Youth Council of Ireland

Youthnet network for the voluntary youth sector

European Union European Regional Development Fund Investing in your future

About the Authors

About NYCI

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for national voluntary youth work organisations in Ireland. It represents and supports the interests of over 50 voluntary youth organisations and uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

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About Youthnet

Youthnet was an independent agency which represented the interests and aspirations of the voluntary youth sector in Northern Ireland. The voluntary youth sector in Northern Ireland delivers youth work in a variety of settings including local communities, churches, rural and urban interfaces and developmental work in schools. It folded in 2016.

Publishing details

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About 'Access All Areas'

> "Equality is not about treating people the same, because different groups of people have different needs, different groups experience discrimination in different areas of life in different ways. Treating everyone the same can have the effect of being an indirect for of discrimination when it is clear that some groups have much greater needs than others.
>
> Equality is about securing equality of opportunity, equality of participation and equality of outcome."
>
> NCCRI, March 2003

Access All Areas was developed by a large group of youth work practitioners across the island of Ireland to be used in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. These experts wrote and edited 15 individual chapters, 12 of which focus on a particular group of young people who frequently experience exclusion in their lives. The experts opted to gather their expertise in one publication because of their recognition that young people have multiple identities and should not be seen under one identity alone. The National Youth Council of Ireland and Youthnet Northern Ireland coordinated this publication bringing expertise from across the island of Ireland together.

Access All Areas Toolkit has been designed to be used by trained youth workers, by volunteer youth leaders, by directors and managers of youth services and others working with children and young people. It invites you to look at what support you need - at both leader and organisational level - to make sure that all young people in your community feel they belong and are actively participating in society.

The reasons we developed Access All Areas

Whilst much has been done in recent years to tackle inequality and to work for the inclusion of people from all backgrounds at all levels of society, discrimination is still a reality for many people.

Many young people face challenges in accessing services, achieving in education, living healthy lives, having a sense of well-being and making a full contribution to society. These challenges are often compounded by additional factors in a young person's life. This may be that they are from a minority ethnic background, are a young Traveller, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer, or are disabled. They may have been involved with the juvenile justice system, find themselves outside of education, training or employment, or be a young parent or experience homelessness or rural isolation. It may be that young people are dealing with mental health issues in their life, or they are a carer for a family member. Young people may find themselves restricted by gender stereotypes or vulnerable to discrimination based on their gender. Sometimes referred to as 'hard to reach', 'diverse' or 'seldom heard' the needs of these young people are explained in Access All Areas alongside valuable advice on how to fully include these young people in your organisation, whether you are involved in a small community-based youth group, a specialised youth group, or a youth project.

 "When we aren't proactively being inclusive we are, in effect, perpetuating exclusion and inequality in our society."

Youth work is ideally placed to challenge inherent inequalities and to engage with young people from a range of backgrounds and to raise awareness of the diversity in society.

How can 'Access All Areas' help you?

1. It can help you to **quickly assess** how well you are currently doing by proofing your work with specialised checklists

2. It can help you to **plan** by providing information about needs, demographics resources and useful contacts

3. It can help you to **provide better service** to all groups by giving practical advice

4. It can help you **develop policies** by providing guidelines

What's in 'Access All Areas'?

Access All Areas Toolkit is arranged with the following chapters, each of which can be downloaded separately from www.youth.ie/diversity

Chapter 1	Promoting inclusive youth work practice – organisational support
Chapter 2	Working with young people from a minority ethnic background
Chapter 3	Working with young LGBT people
Chapter 4	Working with young Travellers
Chapter 5	Working with young people with a physical disability, who have sight loss or who have hearing difficulties
Chapter 6A	Working with young people with a learning disability
Chapter 6B	Working with Autistic young people
Chapter 7	Working with young people with mental health issues
Chapter 8	Working with young people involved in juvenile justice
Chapter 9	Working with young parents
Chapter 10A (ROI)	Working with young people who have left school early
Chapter 10B (NI)	Working with young people who are out of education, employment or training (NEET)
Chapter 11	Working with young men and young women to challenge gender stereotypes
Chapter 12	Working with young carers
Chapter 13	Working across the generations (intergenerational practice)
Chapter 14	Working with young people in rural or geographically isolated areas
Chapter 15	Working with young people who are affected by homelessness

* Please note that each of the chapters is page numbered separately to allow each chapter to stand alone. Youth workers are invited to dip in and out of Toolkit, engaging with different chapters when it best suits their needs.

How is 'Access All Areas' structured?

Chapter 1 'Promoting inclusive youth work practice – organisational support' includes the various tools you will need at organisational level:

- A definition and deeper understanding of equality and inclusion
- An overview of youth work policy in relation to equality and inclusion
- An overview of legislation that aims to ensure equality and inclusion in youth work
- A master checklist to be used by youth leaders and managers
- A master checklist that young people can use to assess the youth activities they attend
- A discussion on collecting and using data (ethnic identifiers). A sample registration form is included.
- Using Access All Areas to carry out a regional audit

Chapters 2-15 all focus on a 'harder to reach' group of young people and are structured in the following way:

- **Demographics**
  Facts and figures about the particular group of young people
- **Terminolog**y
  Definitions of useful terms
- **Needs and Issues**
  Key needs and issues that have been identified by practitioners from current research and practice
- **How to develop inclusive practice**
  Practical guidelines and advice on being more inclusive of young people from the identified group
- **Checklist**
  A specialised checklist to self-assess your group or organisation and identify actions you can take
- **Contacts and resources**
  Useful contacts and resources to further your understanding and build key relationships with relevant organisations

Where do I start?

We recommend that you start with the Master Checklist **(Chapter 1, Page 22)** to assess where you are as an organisation or group. This will help you identify areas you can work on. If you want to take a more detailed examination of your service in light of a particular priority group (e.g. disability) then you can look at that chapter for information and support. Each chapter contains a more detailed checklist which can help you identify the additional actions to put in place to engage with that target group of young people.

After completing the master checklist or a specialist checklist from the end of a particular chapter - fill in an action plan with your team so that your work is given direction and a timeline to keep you on track. The information contained in each chapter will support you in carrying out your action plan.

It is useful to revisit the Toolkit on a regular basis to see what areas you can progress in next.

Don't get burdened down by the amount of information available – see Access All Areas as a reference and support document to facilitate you in reflective practice.

We also want to highlight that, although this toolkit is structured into chapters that relate to particular groups and identities, children and young people are not limited to labels but have multiple identities. This resource is not designed to box people into groupings, it advocates for a holistic approach in meeting the individual needs of young people. We hope that it demonstrates the value of developing a **'universal design approach'** - a way of planning and delivering programmes that ensures, as far as possible, that it caters for as many people as possible, irrespective of their individual circumstances.

We wish you all the best using Access All Areas, we welcome your input and any changes you would like to see. We also offer training on using the Toolkit. If

you would like to share your inclusive youth work stories with us we are collecting them to share.