



VOTING 101

A WORKSHOP FOR
YOUTH WORK SETTINGS



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Purpose:

To harness the educational power of youth work settings to support young people to meaningfully engage with and use their vote

Age range:

Mixed age range 14+ (tailoring will be needed if there are no 16+ in the group), by group 16 years +

Why this resource?

Youth work settings are where young people feel regulated, safe and brave – they are ideal settings for learning. This resource aims to support youth workers to use this environment to support young people to learn about democracy, and their vote.

Youth workers see the many issues facing young people today – from homelessness to poverty to having adequate youth work spaces. Youth work and social justice are intrinsically linked, and these issues are often discussed and addressed within youth work places and spaces. These issues are also linked to voting, and democracy more broadly.

Helping young people understand the importance of their vote is helping them to own and use their power when it comes to these issues. It helps them to take an active role in the decisions that impact them, their friends and their communities.

National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. Our member organisations work with, and for, up to 380,000 young people in every community in Ireland, with the support of 40,000 volunteers and 1,400 paid staff. NYCI functions to represent the interests of young people and youth organisations and its role as the National Representative Youth Work Organisation is recognised in legislation (Youth Work Act, 2001). The work of NYCI is based on principles of equality, social justice and equal participation for all. In achieving these aims, the NYCI seeks the emergence of a society in which young people are valued and supported to achieve their full potential.

youth.ie

Designed by:

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WARM UP

Grab a large sheet of paper. Write out two columns 'yes' and 'no'. Think of a topical question that the group would have strong but divided opinions on. Make up your own or use an example below:

X is the best TV show
(whatever they've been chatting
about lately)

Pineapple belongs on pizza

Manchester United is the best
football team

The voting age should be lowered
to 16

Pizza is better than Chinese
takeaway

Give them sticky dots or a pen to mark a column; every person gets one vote each. Have a quick chat about the results.

Then, allow a second round of voting, based on the below:

15 years and lower: no vote

16-18 years: one vote per person
on the pre-registration, no vote for
unregistered

18+ years: one vote per person
on the register, no vote for
unregistered.

They can check their registration here:
[Check the Register](#)

Discuss the second results with the group.

Prompt questions:

- What do you think of the result?
- Do you think it's fair that some people had more of a say than others?
- Which result, the first or second, better reflects the actual feelings of the group?
- If that's enough for your group, go to appendix one and print it off and leave some copies in the space. Encourage those not registered to get registered there and then.

GO DEEPER

WORKSHOP OPTIONS

WORKSHOP ONE

Voter archetypes – what type of voter are you?

This workshop can be done with 16 years + who are registered to vote, or with younger groups encouraging them to look forward to when they can vote.

Complete the warmup above, which should stimulate a conversation about voting, and checking the register.

Then, grab 5 pieces of flip chart and write the name of the archetype at the top, with a speech bubble that says 'say' underneath, and an action box that says 'do'.

Talk through the archetypes with the group and break them into pairs/3's. Get them to spend 2 minutes with each archetype, filling in what they think that type of voter would 'say' and 'do'. For example, the 'Seeker' might say 'I know who I'm voting for' and do 'Research in the weeks before an election'.

Then get the groups to pass on the page to the next group, and so on, until each group has had time with each archetype.

Important: None of the archetypes are solely positive or negative, so encourage the group to think of both sides.

When all groups have contributed to all types, line the pages side by side on the floor and sit around them as a group. Have a debrief discussion. Prompt questions:

1. How was that as an exercise?
2. Was it hard to balance positive and negative for each archetype?
3. Do you think a voter can be more than one archetype at a time?
4. Do you think people can change which archetype they currently are? How?
5. What will you take away from this?

THE 5 VOTING ARCHETYPES



The Seeker

This archetype studies candidates, policies and debates before voting. They're the ones who collect the leaflets and listen to podcasts about elections and referenda. They sometimes talk to peers but mostly listen to what everyone says before making up their mind on what to vote.



The Rebel

This archetype is fed up with how things are. They think a radical change is needed, but they feel cynical about voting. They push against systems and tend to be drawn to different ideas that 'go against' what they perceive as the 'status quo'.



The Influencer

This archetype loves politics and is often watching clips from current affairs programmes online. They are passionate and often bring up social issues and election topics with their friends. Sometimes that results in heavy debate. They're the one that the group and even family members go to on 'who to vote for'.



The Joker

This archetype thinks that elections are a joke (and maybe even a waste of time). While they read some of the information, whenever it's discussed they use that knowledge to make people laugh through being cynical or making fun. At the last election they spoil their vote by writing 'all the same' on the ballot paper.



The shapeshifter

This archetype feels overwhelmed with voting. They don't feel that they have the knowledge to make a choice, so they usually ask their friends and family and copy the most popular vote. When asked 'why' they voted a certain way, they aren't sure.

WORKSHOP TWO

Know the stats ¹

Part one: True or false

Print out the below page and cut out the “stats” boxes. Spread them on a table and ask the group to categorise them into ‘True’ or ‘False’. Go through the answers together and re- categorise them in front of the group correctly (All trues together, all false together)

Debrief questions:

- What surprised you about what was true?
- What surprised you about what is false?
- What was false that you wished was true?
- What was true that you wish was false?
- Can young people change any of the stats? How?

¹ These statistics are from September 2025. Feel free to update them or include your own to keep this workshop relevant

STAT	ANSWER
You need to register to vote in person	False, you can register online
People without Irish or British Citizenship but living in Ireland can vote in General Elections	False, you can vote in a General Election if you are: An Irish or British citizen Aged 18 or over on the day of the election Registered to vote
The largest number of eligible voters who aren't on the register are under the age of 34	True
Full-time students registered at their home who are living elsewhere while attending an educational institution in the State can register for a postal vote	True
You must bring your polling card with you to vote	False, you just need a valid form of ID.
Less than 10% of eligible 16–18-year-olds are on the pre-register list	True
All polling stations are wheelchair accessible	False, but arrangements must be made to accommodate.
Ireland has a dedicated organisation that looks after electoral events	True (The Electoral Commission!)
You can only vote in pencil	False (but it is the preferred option as it won't smudge!)

APPENDIX

CHECKING THE REGISTER

How do you register to vote?

Before you can vote, you must register. When you register, you put your name on a list of people who can vote. This list is called the electoral register.

To go on the electoral register, you must fill out a registration form.

You can fill out a registration form:

- Online
- On paper through your Local Authority

Registering online - [checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie)

You can register to vote at: www.checktheregister.ie

There is a button that says: Apply online to register.

If you live in Dublin this will bring you to: www.voter.ie

You are asked for details such as your name, address, Eircode, PPSN, date of birth, nationality and email address.

Are you already on the electoral register?

To check your details on the electoral register, you can visit www.checktheregister.ie.

At election time, you can also visit www.checktheregister.ie to check your registration details and the location of your polling station.

For more information, visit: <https://www.youth.ie/advocacy-and-representation/reasons-to-vote/how-to-register-to-vote/>

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CHANGES
LIVES