

Launch of the Participation Network's DVD: Supporting Your Work



The Participation Network has produced a DVD to highlight the benefits of directly engaging with children and young people prior to developing policy and services that impacts on them.

The DVD was launched at Stormont's Long Gallery on 15th December 2010 by Junior Ministers Gerry Kelly MLA and Robin Newton MLA. The event was attended by delegates who are leading on or involved in developing policy from nine government departments, over twenty public sector agencies and five district councils.



The Participation Network is supported by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). Junior Ministers Gerry Kelly MLA and Robin Newton MLA are featured in the DVD and both convey the importance of engaging children and young people. They highlight that participation of this nature is not only central to the Government's Strategy for Children and Young People but that it is essential in meeting Government's obligations under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. They also stress that such participation results in a more effective decision making process that allows for full representation of views.



Speaking at the launch Paula Keenan, Participation Network explained,

"We have been supporting Northern Ireland's decision makers for four years now. Their experience shows that,

where there is an impact on children and young people, talking directly to them leads to more effective policies and more relevant service provision. In the current economic climate it's imperative to get things right first time. Increasingly, government departments, agencies and local government are availing of our free training and consultancy advice service, which can help them keep policies and services firmly on target."



The DVD outlines examples of how children and young people have been included in developing policy that impacts on them. Encouraging other government departments and statutory agencies to make full use of the services available from the Participation Network, Wendy Johnston, Director of Corporate Policy and Children's Champion, from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) comments:

"We were delighted with the support and guidance that the Network provided us recently during the development of our Children and Young People's Action Plan. Those seeking to deliver a service or develop a policy that aims to meet young people's needs should seek support from the Network, especially in the early development stage. Involving the Network in this way can help provide the reassurances needed. It can also help identify and resolve any possible difficulties and ensure all aspects are fully explored before beginning on a specific course of action."



The DVD can be viewed on our homepage
www.participationnetwork.org