



'Greatest Impact – Least Heard' Hearing Young People's Voices on Brexit

Children's Law Centre

June 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Children's Law Centre

The Children's Law Centre (CLC) is an independent charity which works towards a society where all children can participate, are valued, have their rights respected and guaranteed without discrimination and where every child can achieve their full potential.

We offer training and research on children's rights, we make submissions on law, policy and practice affecting children and young people and we run a child accessible legal advice, information and representation service. We have a dedicated free phone legal advice line for children and young people and their parents and carers called CHALKY and a youth advisory group called Youth@CLC. Within our policy, legal, advice and representation services we deal with a range of issues in relation to children and the law, including the law with regard to some of our most vulnerable children and young people, such as looked after children, children who come into conflict with the law, children with special educational needs, children living in poverty, children with disabilities, children with mental health problems and children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Our organisation is founded on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), in particular:

- Children shall not be discriminated against and shall have equal access to protection.
- All decisions taken which affect children's lives should be taken in the child's best interests.
- Children have the right to have their voices heard in all matters concerning them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CLC are grateful to the Community Foundation NI for funding this research through the Brexit Dialogue Fund. CLC would like to thank all the children and young people who participated in the consultations which informed this report.

In particular CLC would like to thank:

Youth@CLC

Youth@CLC is the youth advisory panel for the Children's Law Centre. They are aged 14 – 18 years old and come from various backgrounds. Youth@clc are peer advocates who work to ensure young people's views on issues impacting on their lives are listened to and taken seriously by decision makers. Youth@clc's aim is to make children's rights a reality for all children and young people in NI.

Armagh Youth Council

Armagh Youth Council is a group of young people from the Armagh area, who work together to ensure the voice of young people is heard. Like all Education Authority NI (EANI) Youth Councils, they strive to represent that voice on the widest possible platform, create and promote opportunities for other young people and seek to raise issues on behalf of young people with those agencies who provide for them. Based in the Epicentre in Armagh, the group have run a series of highly popular seasonal events for young people from the wider Armagh area. They have also been part of a wider Youth Council Conference programme over the past three years which bringing together Youth Council representatives from 6 Youth Councils based north and south of the border. The latter hosted a conference on Brexit issues for young people in 2017 and have published a report on the findings of that cross-border debate, highlighting the concerns of young people from both jurisdictions.

Belfast City Council Youth Forum

Belfast City Council Youth Forum was established in 2006 to enable young people to have a say in how the city is run, and to make Belfast a better place for all young people. Based on the principles of the UNCRC, the forum is made up of 40 young people from communities across Belfast. Members are aged between 13 and 18 and serve on the forum for a period of two years. Being on the Youth Forum offers members valuable experiences such as representing young people, organising and running projects on issues important to young people, engage with training opportunities and work with politicians to tell them what young people in Belfast need and to make sure young people are listened to.

Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Let Youth Lead (LYL)

Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum was set up in 1995 by a number of community groups working in the Cliftonville area of North Belfast, with the purpose of working as an umbrella body for community groups operating in the Cliftonville,

Cavehill and Antrim Road areas. With 3,500 young people under the age of 25 years living within the catchment area, the Forum set up Let Youth Lead (LYL), a youth-led project.

Issues for young people in the area include: unemployment, leaving school early with little or no qualifications, suicide, lack of youth facilities, socio-economic disadvantage, legacy of the conflict, drugs and alcohol misuse, and well-being related issues including; apathy, a lack of confidence, and a feeling of powerlessness.

The project aims to ensure young people: have positive role models among their peers, are engaged in positive and constructive activities, have somewhere to go to do things that interest them, are included and consulted about community change and regeneration, respect and understand difference, and are listened to and have a positive image in the community.

Activities focus on personal development programmes for young people ages 7-25 years, training in peer education, outreach and detached youth work to engage with isolated and socially excluded young people in interface areas, establishing programmes in response to identified needs (e.g. young men's groups), and work with young people engaging in risk taking behaviour. The project has set up a Youth Forum which meets weekly to discuss and find solutions to issues identified by young people.

Newry and Mourne Youth Council

Newry and Mourne Youth Council is a group of young people from the Newry and Mourne area, who work together to ensure the voice of young people is heard. The group has 24 members who are supported by an EANI Youth Service staff member and a Volunteer Peer Worker. They meet fortnightly and plan a series of Social Action programmes over the year. They have an ongoing partnership with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and along with Down Youth Council deliver the Annual Youth and Future Talent Award (YAFTA) Programme that recognises and rewards the outstanding contribution that young people make to the life of the community around them. Newry and Mourne Youth Council have just published their report on a consultation with representatives from schools and youth forums in the Newry and Mourne area that explored a series of health related issues that were seen to be paramount for young people locally.

Pilot's Row Youth Centre, Derry

Pilot's Row is a joint community and youth facility which opened in 1980 and is situated in the Bogside area of Derry. A new youth wing was officially opened in 2009, providing a dedicated space for young people. The facility offers a wide variety of activities for all ages and abilities and is open to the public from 8.30am to

10.30pm, six days a week. The youth centre offers youth activities and programmes for young people aged 5-25 years four evenings a week, Monday to Thursday. The current youth programme includes a junior club (aged 5-10 years) two afternoons a week, an intermediate club (aged 11-15 years) four evenings a week and a senior club (aged 16+) four evenings a week.

Polish Language, Culture and Affairs (POLCA)

Polish Language, Culture and Affairs (POLCA) is a charitable organisation based in the greater Belfast area. Established in May 2017, POLCA's main goal is to promote and advance the Polish language and culture and to support Polish people in Northern Ireland. POLCA's aims include:

- Advancing education in Northern Ireland in all matters relating to Polish cultural heritage
- Reducing educational inequalities and improving educational outcomes of bilingual children
- Improving sense of cultural identity and belonging and hence integration in the society
- Promoting community development and active citizenship
- Improving family and communal relations, resilience and coping mechanisms among Polish community
- Promoting amateur sport and healthy lifestyle choices
- Improving employability.

POLCA's flagship project is the Polish Community School run in Belfast. 110 children and young people are registered with the school, and 12 young people aged 13-18 attending regularly. Overall, 130 children and young people and 250+ adults are registered with POLCA, serving the greater Belfast area, but families also come from Lisburn, Ballynahinch, Carrickfergus and Bangor. POLCA is mainly self-funded through parents' fees and fundraising.

Romanian Roma Community Association Northern Ireland

The Romanian Roma Community Association of Northern Ireland (RRCANI) was established to represent the needs of the Roma Community in Northern Ireland. Based in South Belfast, activities focus on working with children and young people, building support for the community to integrate, and the provision of advice. The Roma Community Centre on University Street provides a focal point for the community as a venue for groups and a base for advice and outreach work.

The work of RRCANI has been supported by LORAG (Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group) in a mentoring role in areas of governance and financial management; and by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) through the provision of healthcare services.

Shantallow Youth Centre, Derry

Established in 1981, Shantallow Youth Centre provides a full time youth provision in the area, which has a very high population of young people. The centre is currently open five evenings each week and also provides afternoon activities.

The approach to youth provision focuses on providing a space where young people can be independent and in control, a place which prides itself on being 'their centre'. Shantallow Youth Centre recognises challenges within the catchment area and services for young people focus both on offering safe entertainment as well as providing space and IT facilities where they can complete homework. Empowerment of young people is the main objective and for over a decade a group of young people aged 12-16 has made up the members' committee for the youth club.

BACKGROUND

Since the EU Brexit referendum in June 2016, the Children's Law Centre (CLC) has been working to ensure that the potential serious adverse impact of Brexit on children is fully addressed in the Brexit negotiations. CLC have been advocating for children's voices to be heard to inform negotiations, no roll back on existing children's rights protections, a recognition of the need to future proof children's rights protections against international standards and the need to protect the integrity of the Good Friday Agreement, including the need to ensure the equivalency of children's rights protections in both jurisdictions on the island.

Brexit will have significant implications for all sections of the population in NI. Despite the fact that it is children and young people who will be disproportionately most affected by Brexit, as they will live with the consequences for the longest time, the potential impact of Brexit on children's lives was not considered in the Brexit referendum debate. This is the second consultation that CLC have undertaken to gather the views of young people on Brexit. The report from the previous consultation, completed in June 2016 (funded by the Police Service of Northern Ireland) can be accessed here:

<http://www.childrenslawcentre.org.uk/news/children-s-voices-on-brexit>

As well as consulting with diverse groups of young people about Brexit to better understand their concerns and priority issues, CLC have also been scoping the interface between EU law, policy, funding and practice and how it impacts on the lives and rights of children. To that end CLC and the Children's Rights Alliance (Dublin) through PILA (Public Law Interest Alliance) and the PILS (Public Interest Litigation) Project engaged A&L Goodbody solicitors to consider some of the legal aspects of the impact of Brexit on the rights of children and young people across the island of Ireland.

A&L Goodbody's report considers some of the implications of Brexit for children in respect of the Common Travel Area, citizenship and movement, family law and the movement of children and families, education, health, protection of children and children and criminal justice. A full copy of the report can be found on the CLC website: <http://www.childrenslawcentre.org.uk/brexit>

CLC have also been working with children's rights organisations in England, Scotland and Wales to put forward amendments to the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill being brought forward by the UK government, such as the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and engaging with decision makers in Westminster, Dublin and Brussels to help ensure that children's rights and the Good Friday Agreement are protected through the Brexit process. Furthermore, CLC have been working closely with human rights NGOs on the island of Ireland to ensure that the Good Friday Agreement and human rights are protected through the Brexit process.

To inform this report and their further engagement on Brexit the Children's Law Centre undertook to engage and consult directly with children and young people on the extent to which they were aware of Brexit, their views on how Brexit might impact on children and young people's lives in NI and their views on how to achieve the best 'Brexit deal' for children and young people in this jurisdiction.

CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Seven consultation workshops were held with nine groups on the following dates:

22 nd January 2018	Youth@CLC
6 th February 2018	Armagh Youth Council Newry & Mourne Youth Council
22 nd February 2018	Shantallow Youth Centre Pilot's Row Youth Club
6 th March 2018	Romanian Roma Community Association NI (RRCANI)
10 th March 2018	Polish Language, Culture & Affairs (POLCA)
12 th March 2018	Belfast City Council Youth Forum
26 th March 2018	Let Youth Lead, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Trust

A total of 103 young people attended the 7 consultation workshops.

A further 18 groups were invited to participate in the research, but were unable to do so within the time frame of the project for a variety of reasons.

Views expressed by young people in the workshops have been highlighted in italics. To ensure confidentiality all views represented are anonymous.

The primary aim of this report is as far as possible to represent verbatim the views of individual young people. However CLC have also included a summary interpretation of views expressed in common by young people who participated in the research.

Consultation Methodology

All workshops were facilitated by Anna Grindle (CLC - Youth Participation Consultant) and other CLC staff, during the period January 2018 – March 2018. Through the consultation process CLC aimed to ensure that the views of a broad range of children and young people from all areas of Northern Ireland have been represented in this report and in particular those who may be affected most by Brexit. Consultees included young people from both rural and urban border communities, young people from other urban areas and young EU migrant groups i.e. Polish and Roma young people living in NI.

Each workshop began with capacity building activities to inform young people about Brexit, the role of the EU in their lives at present and how that may change after Brexit.

Workshops included a series of introductory questions to measure the extent to which young people felt well informed about Brexit, to identify where and how they received information on Brexit, how they feel about Brexit and the possible implications for their lives and the lives of other NI young people. As prior knowledge of the EU was low across all the young people's groups, capacity building exercises were used to increase awareness of the impact of the European Union and EU law on young people's everyday lives. These exercises included discussion on an historical timeline tracking the evolution of both the EU and the UK's membership of the EU and a "Brexit in Numbers" quiz to raise awareness of how NI may be particularly affected by Brexit e.g. number of daily cross border crossings by children living on one side of the border and attending school on the other (see Appendix 1).

Young people worked in small groups to discuss a range of Brexit related scenarios across a range of themes to identify the potential impact for children and young people and how Government might minimise any adverse impact for children and young people (see Appendix 1).

Scenario themes discussed were:

- Healthcare
- Access to third level education
- Citizenship
- Cross Border Freedom of Movement
- European Health Insurance Card
- Cross border education
- European Social Fund

PROFILE OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

At the beginning of each workshop, we gathered data from young people in relation to their age, identity and initial feelings on Brexit. Other activities were completed by voting with a sticker in response to statements, e.g. how 'European' they felt, how informed they felt at Brexit at different points in time.

Age

Participants were mainly aged 12 – 17 years however a small number were aged 18-19 years and at college or university. Only one participant indicated that they had voted in the referendum (See Figure 1).

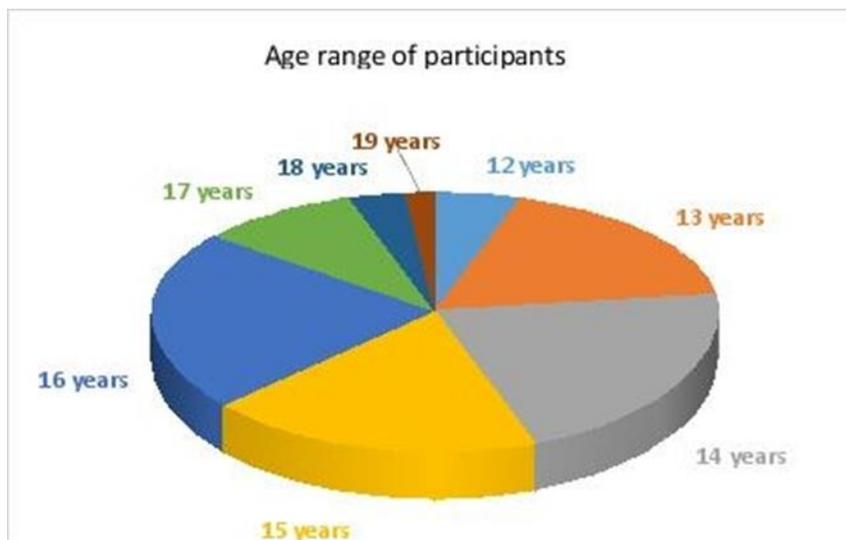


Figure 1: Age range of participants at 5 out of 7 consultation workshops (Total of 52 responses).

Identity

Participants were asked to describe how they would identify themselves. As an open question, responses were generated by young people. Generally, the majority of young people of who had spent all their lives here identified along community and faith based descriptions, but also added phrases such as 'rugby lover', 'confused' or 'sociable.'

All of the 25 Roma young people who participated in the consultation workshop identified as Romanian. Several of the Roma young people had lived in NI for a number of years, whilst others had only arrived to NI in the past few months and were not yet attending school. Whilst not all of the Roma group were fluent in English, there was no need for a translator as some of the older young people were able to translate for the younger children and/or those who had only recently come to live in NI.

WORKSHOP THEMES

BASELINE AWARENESS OF BREXIT/EU

Participants were initially asked to indicate how informed they felt about Brexit, both at the time of the referendum (June 2016) and at the time of the consultation workshop (March 2018). A total of 65 young people responded to this question (see Figure 2). Whilst there was an increase in the number of young people who said they “100% get” Brexit from the time of the referendum (June 2016) to the time of the March 2018 consultation workshops, the majority of young people indicated they were still ‘confused’ by Brexit or had ‘no idea’ what Brexit was or how it impacted on their lives.

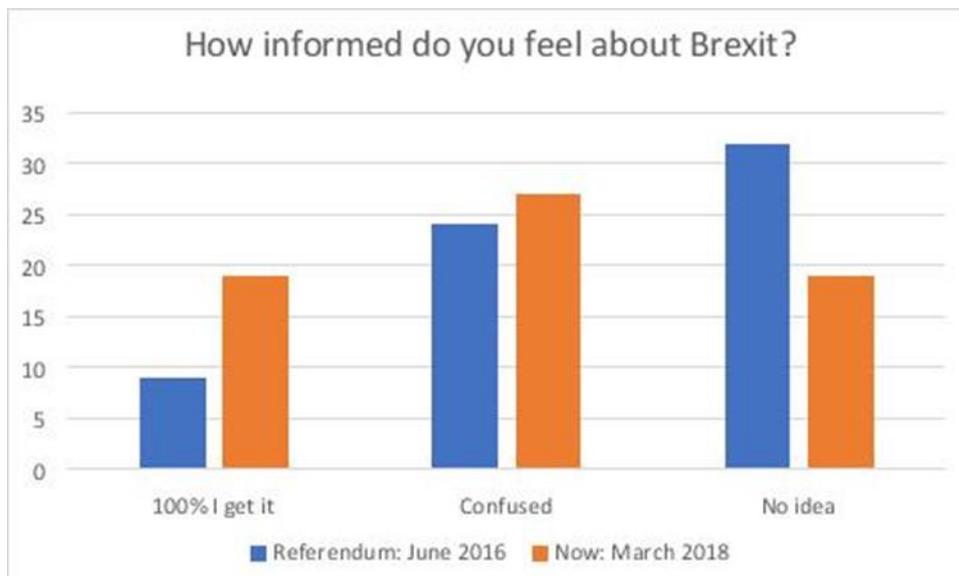


Figure 2: How informed young people felt about Brexit, in June 2016 and March 2018 (Total of 65 responses)

SENSE OF FEELING EUROPEAN

Participants were asked to respond to statements in response to a question 'How European do I feel?' (Figure 3). Just over half of the 51 young people who answered this said they felt 'connected to Europe', with others saying they 'felt European'. Just over a quarter said either that 'Europe is something I hear about' or 'Europe feels far away'.

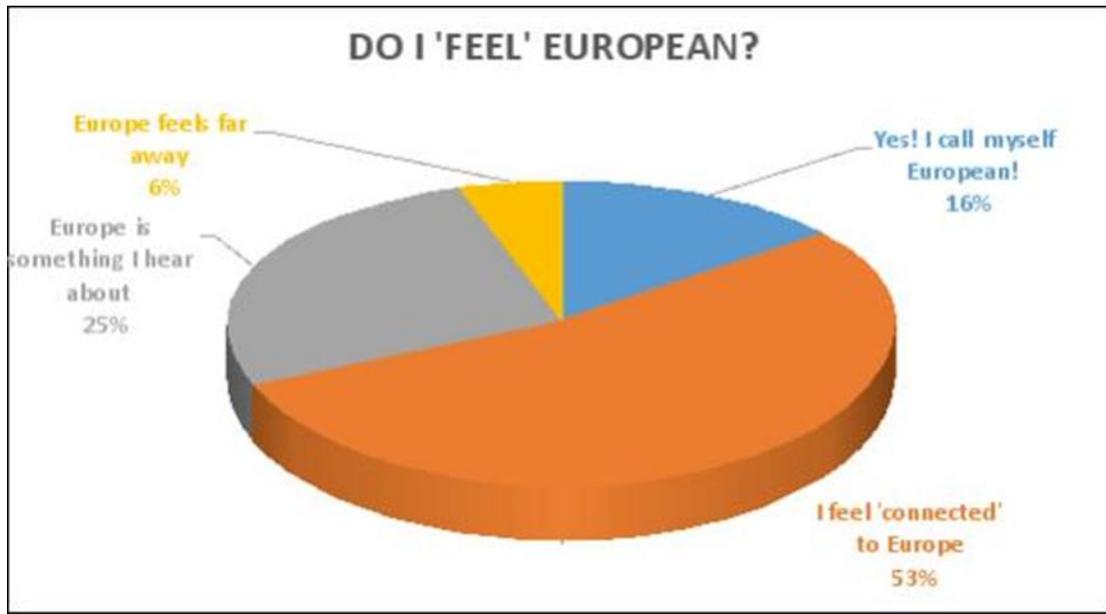


Figure 3: Young people's responses to question 'How European do I feel?'

SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON BREXIT

Young people who said they were aware of Brexit were asked to indicate where they received information on Brexit from. The main sources of information on Brexit identified by young people are summarised in Figure 4 below:

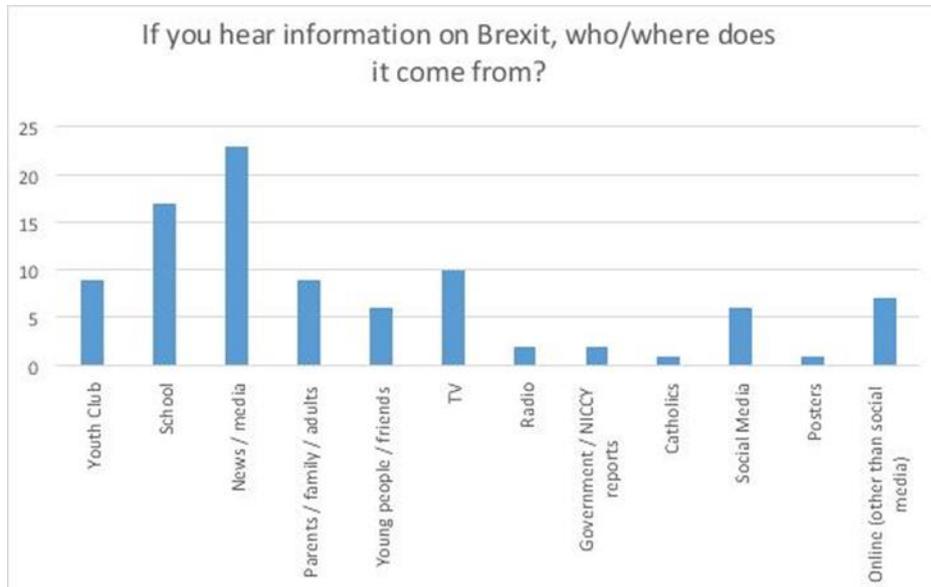
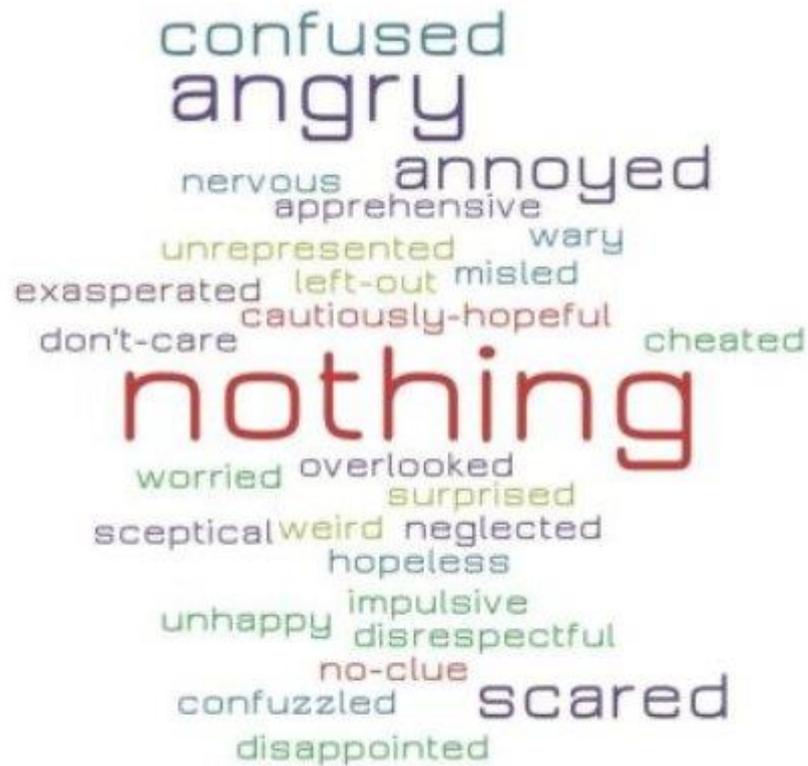


Figure 4: If you hear information on Brexit, where does it come from?

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEELINGS ABOUT BREXIT

Young people were asked 'What words describe how you feel about Brexit?'

The word cloud below reflects the main responses generated by young people, with more frequent responses shown in larger text.



WordItOut

Many of the young people consulted said they were confused, angry and annoyed during the period leading up to, during and after the referendum. They highlighted a number of issues that they felt were not considered and weren't discussed before the referendum (such as the potential impact of a 'hard' Border between NI and the Republic of Ireland). They also indicated that a lot of news and media regarding Brexit had mostly negative connotations. Participants also felt there was a lack of engagement with Brexit in schools generally, or education on what it means to be European.

"We were misled."

"[The Government] didn't keep up with the campaign promises."

"It should be informed by facts only."

“Can I say – we’ve been told a lie – we should make sure we have the right information, make sure that we are all into this – should be truthfully informed, not manipulated.”

“I feel annoyed, because there is a lot of negative things [about Brexit] that Britain didn’t say.”

“Badly thought through. Pushed through. Ignoring wishes of Northern Irish people.”

“Did Article 50 have to be done then? Could they not have a plan?”

“I feel Brexit is bad and disrespectful to Irish people.”

“I feel angry. [The referendum result] is inconsiderate for the Irish in NI.”

“Everyone is so misinformed, it happened in such a short space of time. People voted about migrants but didn’t realise it would affect their holidays.”

Young people from the Polish and Roma communities expressed concern about their status post-Brexit:

“Feel sad...I have grown up here, this is home...are we getting thrown out?”

“I might have to move...would like to stay.”

A number of young people were angry that they did not have a say in a decision that will impact on their lives more than the majority of the rest of the population:

“I feel unrepresented.”

“We’ve been pushed into it. We are dealing with the consequences.”

“It will affect my future.”

“It’s going to be a mess.”

There was concern among young people about the impact of Brexit on the peace process in Northern Ireland. Young people also referenced the potential impact of Brexit on the Good Friday Agreement:

“We are going backwards.”

“It is bringing back the past in Northern Ireland.”

“The Good Friday Agreement might get forgotten about and we won’t get this identity anymore. It will cause another set of troubles if it is forgotten about.”

“We don’t want to lose the Good Friday Agreement. It delivers equality and peace and must be protected through the Brexit process.”

When asked if there is anything good about Brexit, some young people felt it could improve our economy as there may be a push to increase production in the UK of necessary goods. Others identified independence from Europe as a benefit:

“I feel saddened that products from other EU countries will cost more, but also feel like it’s an opportunity to boost our own economy.”

“It could help us build our economy.”

“Reduce global warming by producing our own products in our own country.”

“Can make us more of an independent country.”

“Build better relationships with the rest of Britain.”

One young person described Brexit as the UK wanting to have the best of both worlds:

*“It seems like the UK wants to take the benefits of the EU, but not the bad or the hard parts: it’s like leaving school and doing minimal work but expecting A*s.”*

HAVING A SAY IN BREXIT

Context

Article 12 of the UNCRC requires the UK Government to respect children’s right to express and have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them. They should be given meaningful opportunities to have their opinions heard on Brexit related issues by decision makers and should be included in discussions and negotiations so that their rights are protected through the process.¹

¹ Eurochild, Statement and Call to Action on the Impact of Brexit on Children and Young People, available at http://crae.org.uk/media/121611/statement_call_to_action_impact_of_brexit_on_children_and_young_people_19june2017_eurochild.pdf

Young people were very annoyed that they did not have an opportunity to vote in the referendum. The 'Votes at 16' campaign was referenced in almost every discussion and a number of young people suggested that a second referendum should be held on the conditions on which the UK are to leave the European Union, with 16 and 17 year olds having the right to vote in that referendum.

A number of young people also highlighted the lack of young voices in the Brexit debate and negotiations to date.

"I couldn't vote – but living with the consequences."

"Other people voted for what my future is going to be."

"16+ should be allowed to vote and there should be a second referendum on leaving the EU."

"Government should come to young people for a discussion."

"They need to listen to us."

"Young people need more of a voice."

"We need more of a voice in it."

THE IRISH BORDER

Context

The implications of enforcing any Brexit which does not take full account of the daily reality of the lives of children living in NI will have far reaching impacts on the children and young people living north and south of the border on the island of Ireland.

Children in Northern Ireland, and not just those living close to the border, live their lives "across" what has become an increasingly seamless border. Houses and farms which pepper the border counties literally span both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Roads criss-cross the border with the potential for roads to move between jurisdictions 6 or 7 times within the space of a few miles. There are an estimated 23,000² commuters crossing the border on a regular basis for work

² Border People Briefing No 5, May 2016 (page 2) <http://borderpeople.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Briefing-5-revision15June2016.pdf#page=2>

purposes and an estimated 1,852,000³ car crossings per month along the North South border. Traveller children move with their families between the North and South of Ireland on a regular basis. Children socialise across the border, crossing it to play sports, attend concerts and to access leisure facilities. They live in one jurisdiction and have part-time jobs across the road in the other jurisdiction.

Young people in the workshops had a number of questions in relation to the potential introduction of a hard border between Ireland, North and South.

“What would happen if you lived one side of the border but went to school on the other side of the border?”

“If under 18 will you be allowed to travel [across the border] by yourself?”

“Will I need a passport to walk the dog?”

Young people considered the potential impacts of a hard border in Ireland and identified a number of issues including an increase in travel time, disruption getting to school or visiting friends across the border, the impact of not having a passport and worryingly, the presence of paramilitaries along the border. Young people also went to the very heart of the issue, linking practical aspects of the border to their daily lives, wellbeing, peer relationships and sense of identity and belonging within their locality.

“Travel time depends on hard or soft border. If a hard border, it will take you longer.”

“Might not be able to go to school [across the border] or our belongings will be searched [crossing the border].”

“People might be late for school [if stopped crossing border]. Miss out on learning and a right to education.”

“Might not be able to go to school unless you have your passport checked at the border.”

“Might have to move school.”

³ Irish Government Publication: Brexit Ireland’s Priorities (page 7)
https://merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/EU-UK/Key_Irish_Documents/M10016_Department_of_the_Taoiseach_Brexit_Report_Web_spreads-2_new_pdf.pdf

“Young people might become anti-social or get depressed if they can’t go to their school.”

“It won’t be as easy to see family and friends.”

“If you don’t have money for a passport, can’t cross the border.”

“I would not be able to do the things I want to do. People might not be allowed to go to school or work. If your family lives across the border, you might not be able to see them.”

“Danger of paramilitaries.”

“Might lose friends, can’t see them, can’t socialise.”

When some young people in Derry were asked to make recommendations to the UK Government on negotiating the best Brexit deal for NI, suggestions included:

“To stay in EU, no Brexit, United Ireland, keep soft border.”

“Don’t have Brexit, respect the Remain voice [of 56% in NI]. Keep it the same as now.”

“Don’t have a border – unite Ireland. Have a 32-county Ireland. Keep it the same as now.”

“Keep it the same, no border at all.”

“The government should give young people rights and make it stay the same.”

“Keep the soft border.”

Young people in some groups felt that the border was currently “invisible” and they could move freely North and South. In that context they discussed a United Ireland as a potential solution to the problems Brexit was going to cause.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Context

The Common Travel Area between Britain and Ireland together with EU membership and the outworkings of the Good Friday Agreement has ensured that children living on both sides of the border in Ireland have generally been able to access services either side of the border on an equal footing.

There is now a real concern about the impact of Brexit on the ability of children in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland to access health, education and care services across the border. The Department of Education NI, for example, has confirmed that at least 600⁴ school children live on one side of the border, but attend school on the other side of the border.

Children from NI often access critical, and sometimes lifesaving services in the Republic of Ireland including through a process known as Extra Contractual Referrals facilitated by EU Healthcare Directives. These children often have complex needs including mental health needs. Children from the South similarly access services in the UK.

EU integration has also enabled economies of scale across the Irish border, such as the sharing of key healthcare services, particularly where specific expertise and facilities are not viable in a small jurisdiction such as Northern Ireland. In 2014, it was agreed that children in the North could access paediatric cardiac facilities in Dublin. Between January and September 2017, 23 children travelled from Northern Ireland to Our Lady's Children's Hospital in Dublin⁵. Such cooperation is facilitated by the Good Friday Agreement and EU Directives, including Directives on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and EU rules on data protection that enable the sharing of patient details. However the process of re-negotiating these arrangements along with the many other such agreements post Brexit will be challenging and lengthy which, raises the issue as to what will happen in the interim to e.g. children in NI who need paediatric cardiac services.

Furthermore, the movement of health related goods e.g. drugs and services, health professionals and patients, and the sharing of some facilities and funding across the Irish border may prove challenging post Brexit.

⁴ NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) Brexit Series: Department of Education NI (Engagement with Department of Education officials) 21 June 2017

⁵ "Brexit and the NHS", The UK in a Changing Europe, page 10 <http://ukandeu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Brexit-and-the-NHS-.pdf>

For example, unhindered by border checks and supported by reciprocal arrangements between healthcare providers in NI and the Republic of Ireland, an ambulance can travel to wherever hospital is closest and best for any particular patient on either side of the border⁶. Such arrangements would be threatened by the reintroduction of any border on the island of Ireland which would slow or interfere in any way with the movement of ambulances and any ‘hardening’ of the customs border between the UK and the EU which gave rise to restrictions on the movement of pharmaceutical products, medical devices or medical staff.

Young people were also concerned about the wider implications in relation to freedom of movement across the European Union.

Freedom of movement and residence for persons in the EU is the cornerstone of Union citizenship, allowing for EU citizens and their family to travel freely throughout the EU.

In relation to freedom of movement within the island of Ireland, young people voiced concern in relation to attending school, going to work or visiting family across the border.

Young people were also worried about the impact of a border when accessing emergency healthcare:

“Children might die if they have to stop at the border going to a hospital in the south.”

In relation to freedom of movement across the European Union, young people voiced concern in relation to their opportunities to travel post-Brexit:

“Young people would be angry if they couldn’t travel.”

“If you go inter-railing you see cultures, budget your own money, learn how to be with others, balance different considerations along with a key opportunity to develop an understanding of Europe.”

“Love travelling, would want to go travelling before starting university, but don’t think I would be able to do that anymore.”

Young people from the Roma community were very worried that they will have to return to Romania when their right to freedom of movement as EU citizens is no longer applicable in the UK post Brexit.

⁶ “Brexit and the NHS”, The UK in a Changing Europe, page 18 <http://ukandeu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Brexit-and-the-NHS-.pdf>

Young people were also worried that family members would not be able to visit them after Brexit day. Young people from the Polish community expressed similar concerns about visiting family members.

“Worried about leaving NI. Go back to Romania – no jobs, no money to live in Romania.”

“All people say we will leave, have to go back to Romania. I want to be something here.”

“I won’t have these choices in Romania.”

“Miss our grandparents, they want to come here.”

“It might be difficult for people who have lived in Northern Ireland a long time, if family can’t visit in the future. Will granny be able to visit me?”

CITIZENSHIP

Context

The Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement provides that the two Governments (UK and Ireland):

‘Recognise the birth right of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments and would not be affected by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland.’⁷

The Joint Report from the negotiators of the European Union and the United Kingdom Government on progress during phase 1 of negotiations under Article 50 TEU on the United Kingdom’s orderly withdrawal from the European Union outlines that:

‘Both Parties acknowledge that the 1998 Agreement recognises the birth right of all the people of Northern Ireland to choose to be Irish or British or both and be accepted as such. The people of Northern Ireland who are Irish citizens will continue to enjoy rights as EU citizens, including where they reside in Northern Ireland. Both Parties therefore agree that the Withdrawal Agreement should respect and be

⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136652/agreement.pdf

without prejudice to the rights, opportunities and identity that come with European Union citizenship for such people and, in the next phase of negotiations, will examine arrangements required to give effect to the ongoing exercise of, and access to, their EU rights, opportunities and benefits.⁸

Clarity is required as to what rights will be enjoyed by young people in Northern Ireland who, by virtue of the Good Friday Agreement, identify as Irish and therefore EU Citizens; and what enforcement mechanisms will exist to allow them to realise those rights. Further consideration is also required in relation to the different and potentially reduced rights protections which may be enjoyed by those who do not exercise their right to identify as Irish citizenship. It may mean UK citizens and Irish citizens born in and living alongside each other in NI will have different rights entitlements. Different rights protections create the potential for identity to resurface as a highly divisive issue in NI.

When young people discussed issues around citizen rights they recognised the importance of everyone in NI having equal citizenship rights and the equal right to identify as Irish and/or British.

They felt there should be equal access to claim EU citizenship rights if possible post Brexit. There was some concern that their right to identity was being compromised.

“I feel more secure travelling on an Irish (EU) passport.”

“NI is unique due to its Troubled past and the right to Irish and British citizenship.”

“No one should be forcing you to give up your British citizenship.”

“It’s forcing you to represent yourself with an identity you don’t have.”

“Will there be a difference inter-railing on an Irish passport versus a British passport?”

“What will it mean to be an Irish citizen in NI?”

“Scared that the Good Friday Agreement would get forgotten about and if [the GFA] was forgotten about, it would cause another set of troubles.”

“At the moment you can have both. I don’t want to identify as Irish, but I want to travel.”

“Ian Paisley Jnr saying apply for an Irish passport. It’s not a matter of identity, it’s just common sense.”

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/joint_report.pdf

Young people from Poland expressed intention to apply for a British or Irish passport and saw this as a means of staying in Ireland.

"It's [my passport] from Poland, but I'm applying for a British one at the moment."

"Same"

"I'd like an Irish passport to stay."

EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD (EHIC)

Context

Under the terms of the December Joint Report,

'Rules for healthcare, including the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) scheme, will follow Regulation (EC) No 883/2004. Persons whose competent state is the UK and are in the EU27 on the specified date (and vice versa) – whether on a temporary stay or resident – continue to be eligible for healthcare reimbursement, including under the EHIC scheme, as long as that stay, residence or treatment continues.'⁹

It is yet to be negotiated or agreed whether or not those citizens living in the north of Ireland who identify as Irish will be able to continue to use their EHIC post Brexit.

Young people were distressed when the possibility of losing the EHIC was discussed. They all expressed a desire to travel through Europe and recognised the importance of having convenient and affordable access to healthcare as an EU citizen. This was a very tangible issue for young people, with several producing their EHIC cards to show us.

"There is a fear of losing EHIC – it could lead to a large increase in costs."

"Will there be an alternative in place of EHIC? How much would we be charged if there was no EHIC in place?"

"We won't have the money for healthcare [in EU countries]."

"Keep the EHIC, keep the EHIC, keep the EHIC."

"It's important to have health care, means we don't need to pay when we are sick or injured on holidays."

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/joint_report.pdf

EDUCATION

Context

EU countries are responsible for their own education and training systems, but the EU helps them set joint goals and share good practices, for example:

- The new Erasmus+, programme is designed to tackle youth unemployment by improving young people's skills and employability. The new Erasmus+ programme has a total budget of €14.7bn (40% up on the previous funding period, which ended in 2013), it will help over 4 million people (mostly young) to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad and it will also help over 125,000 organisations to work with counterparts abroad on innovating and modernising teaching and youth work practices.
- The EU Youth Strategy promotes equal opportunities in education and employment for young people and encourages them to play an active part in society.
- Europass is a set of documents to help applicants present their skills and qualifications in a standard Europe wide format. This enables employers to understand foreign qualifications and helps workers apply for jobs abroad.
- The European Qualifications Framework makes it easier to compare different national qualifications by linking examinations and education levels to a common reference framework. It is designed to help Europeans study and work abroad.
- Through the Copenhagen Process, European countries (including all EU countries), trade unions and employers cooperate to improve vocational and educational training. One result is the European credit system and quality assurance network, which help people work and study abroad.
- Through the Bologna process and the European Higher Education Area it should be easier to move between education systems within Europe, by promoting mutual recognition of periods of study, comparable qualifications and uniform quality standards.
- The European Institute of Innovation and Technology's (EIT) remit is to enable Europe's top higher education institutions, research centres and businesses to cooperate on major social challenges.
- The Marie Skłodowska-Curie scheme supports career development and training for researchers in all scientific disciplines, especially by helping them study and work in different countries and sectors.¹⁰

The young people consulted recognised the benefit of belonging to the EU in relation to the opportunity to participate in exchange programmes and visit other European countries.

¹⁰ https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/education-training-youth_en

“In our education system we don’t learn lots about other countries.”

“Schools might not do trips to other EU countries.”

“There won’t be as many opportunities.”

“Loss of freedom – no exchanges.”

“Lose chance to go to France to speak to French people. Mightn’t be able to become a French teacher if you wanted to.”

“Would like to go on Erasmus exchange – looks like it won’t be as viable in the future. We may lose links with schools in other EU countries.”

“When I did french A-Level, the exchange trip was great for their spoken language, worried that the link will be broken for future students.”

“Would student visas be required [to study in another EU country] or harder to get?”

Young people also considered the impact of accessing places in universities within the island of Ireland:

“Will I be classed as an international student in the Republic of Ireland? That would create confusion about options and choices with plans for what to do after school.”

“It will be harder to get into university post Brexit as currently 11,000 Irish students go to a university in the UK. If Irish students can’t access UK university, there will be more competition for places [on the island of Ireland].”

Young people from the Roma community were also worried that if they were required to return to Romania that they could not afford to access education there:

“In Romania – have to pay for high school. Here it is free, it’s good here.”

“If we go home it means we won’t have school anymore, because in Romania you have to pay for big school and our family can’t afford it.”

EU FUNDING

Context

The EU has very generously supported the peace process on the island of Ireland including, but not exclusively, through funding. EU cross border funding for Ireland/NI including Peace funding between 2007 - 2020 will total €453.9 million¹¹. The total amount of funding received (and projected) by NI from the EU is stated as €6982.4 million¹². Many projects which support vulnerable young people have been and are funded through EU Peace and INTERREG Programmes. These have been critical in building the peace, supporting young people in transitioning from conflict and preventing young people born post ceasefire being drawn into paramilitary groups. In the current context of young people still raising concerns about the level of paramilitary threats and attacks against young people, any undermining of programmes that support vulnerable young people, some of whom may be at risk of such threats, is deeply worrying.

Young people expressed concerns that loss of EU funding to NI may prevent some young people getting the skills training they need to get a job and could worsen mental ill health for young people, increase anti-social behaviour and make the drugs problem worse. Young people from the Roma and Polish communities were aware of how funding supported different opportunities.

“If it wasn’t for LYL [Let Youth Lead] programme many of us wouldn’t be here... it helps you stay focused in school.”

“Youth programmes have a big impact on young people, reduces anti-social behaviour.”

“Youth service keeps young people off the streets, if there isn’t going to be as much funding for the youth service; we would end up back on the streets doing things we shouldn’t like drinking.”

“Young people would drop out of school if they didn’t have the youth worker support.”

“I think if youth clubs don’t get funding, anti-social behaviour and drugs will get worse than it already is.”

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/sites/unitedkingdom/files/eu_funding_in_ni_2007-2013_and_2014-2020_1.pdf

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/sites/unitedkingdom/files/eu_funding_in_ni_2007-2013_and_2014-2020_1.pdf

“A lot of us wouldn’t be as positive as we are now, If X [youth worker] wasn’t here, we wouldn’t be here.”

“Been to Newcastle, having fun with the youth leader. We stayed three days and slept there.”

“We have better relationships with other communities because of youth group.”

“EU is beneficial to the UK, it might not be visible on a wider scale, but more visible on a local scale, e.g. projects funded by EU [in NI] and same in Poland – saw projects funded in villages.”

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACTS

Young people are worried about the negative impact Brexit is having on relationships within Northern Ireland. For young people in border areas, this was markedly more personalised, their responses linked this issue to potential impacts on personal well-being and self-esteem. The young people from Poland drew attention to the importance of having a mix of friends. A number of young people also mentioned that the referendum result was based on an anti-migrant sentiment within the UK. Young people also felt that when the UK leaves the EU, the opportunity to mix with different cultures will be curtailed which will not help with cultural understanding and tolerance within NI.

“It would be difficult to keep your friends.”

“It’s important to have friends from the country I was born in, important to maintain that contact.”

“I make new friends in classes. The most important aspect [of school] is friends.”

“Racism and discrimination are coming back since the Brexit vote. People are having things written on their cars.”

“Votes to get migrants out, but that just breeds isolationism. It puts UK’s position on world platform at risk.”

“It is good to learn through travel, especially about cultural differences.”

The EU is a global body – the UK coming out the EU is a loss of opportunity, isolating. EU is a gateway to relationships with other countries.”

OPPORTUNITY COSTS

Context

Potentially significant casualties of Brexit are the benefits we gain from the security, judicial and intelligence exchange and gathering that have been developed by the EU over many decades. We will potentially lose access to ECRIS which is the centralised record of criminal offenders, including child sex offenders. ECRIS is vital in tracking those who seek to travel between Member States to perpetrate crime and/or avoid detention. We will potentially lose access to the European Judicial network which provides a vital channel of communication between the judiciary working on cross border abduction and child protection cases. We will also potentially lose access to Europol and Frontex which co-ordinate policing and data collection across borders. Other relevant security mechanisms and agencies that are currently in place include Eurojust, European Arrest Warrants, Second Generation Schengen Information System (SIS II), Passenger Name Records, Prüm, the European Counter Terrorism Centre, the European Cybercrime Centre, the EU Internet Referral Unit and Eu-LISA. The UK Government has also indicated that it does not intend to continue to accept the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU)¹³. The impact of Brexit on criminal justice systems was not the focus of this consultation, but was discussed by young people in the consultation workshops undertaken by the Children's Law Centre in Spring 2017:

<http://www.childrenslawcentre.org.uk/news/children-s-voices-on-brexit>

The young people CLC spoke to also identified the potential of a drop in standards in relation to food, collaborating with other EU countries in relation to scientific and medical research and the reintroduction of EU roaming charges – this will have a particularly significant impact on young people living in border areas in NI.

“[Will Brexit mean] losing standards? Regulations on food exports and variable standards in the rest of the world – standardised in the EU.”

“Will we lose opportunities to study/ work in Europe?”

“Will we lose opportunities for medical/ scientific research due to loss of EU funding?”

“Will we lose opportunities to collaborate with research across Europe?”

“We will lose out on jobs which will increase the unemployment rate.”

“EU roaming charges – will these continue?”

¹³ Professor Helen Stalford, European Children's Rights Unit, University of Liverpool

KEY MESSAGES FOR GOVERNMENT

At the end of each workshop, young people were asked what their key messages for Government would be in relation to Brexit.

Key message 1

Young people want to be kept informed about Brexit and are looking for more opportunities to have their say as the negotiations progress.

Young people in every consultation workshop welcomed the provision of factual, non-biased awareness raising information on Brexit issues and the opportunity to discuss the relevance of the Brexit decision to their future lives. For many this was the first time they had been given this opportunity and many felt better informed on Brexit following participation in the workshops.

“This has been a really useful workshop because we’ve talked about this in-depth with non-biased information. It helps inform debate, it’s so skimmed over whenever it comes up.”

“It interests you more when you learn about it... it makes us want to be involved in it ‘cos we’ve got freedom of speech.”

“I have more questions. I know what to ask now.”

“Listen to us. We didn’t get a say then, give us a say now. We have been dragged into this mess, the Government needs to find solutions.”

“They need to realise it’s our future it’s going to affect. They need to listen to us.”

“Take time and listen to us. Listen to us.”

Key message 2

Young people said they needed access to child friendly and accessible information about Brexit and its implications.

“We need to know what we are giving up...in writing...by leaving the EU, for all people, not just young people, in straight-forward, easy to understand language.”

Coming out of the consultation with Roma and Polish young people it is clear that migrant families in particular need additional language support to understand and prepare for Brexit. For example, one young person told us: *“I am the only one that speaks English in my family. I have to translate for my parents when they go to the doctors.”*

Key message 3

Young people called on the NI Executive/ Assembly to do all they could to ensure that the circumstances in this jurisdiction are recognised in the Brexit negotiations.

“Our Government need to put aside their differences and pride and work for us ‘cos we’re going to be the most affected but currently we don’t have a voice as they are not sitting.”

Key message 4

A number of young people advocated for the need for a transition period and that changes should be made incrementally.

“It is important to have a transition period and make the changes incrementally. Can’t change too quick, do things gradually and make small changes.”

“Small changes – to laws (take into account that people need to get used to the changes), and borders (get used to changes, they may not like the changes).”

Key message 5

A number of young people from the Roma and Polish communities need legal advice, support and clarification on their right to remain living in NI and how freedom of movement across Europe to maintain contact with family members residing in EU countries e.g. Romania and Poland will be facilitated post Brexit.

“Tell the government to help us stay here. We really want to stay here. We like it here.”

“To help us stay here and not go to Romania, we like it here and we have all the conditions we need – like school.”

“It might be difficult for people who have lived in NI a long time, if family can’t visit in the future, will my granny be able to visit me? [Tell the government to] make it easy for relatives to come and visit.”

Key message 6

In relation to the border, young people wanted to ensure that there are minimal changes to how the border is managed now:

“Make it easy to cross the Irish/NI border.”

“There has been so much fighting over the border in Ireland for centuries, we get to a good place – are we throwing it away? Don’t throw it away.”

Key message 7

Young people also recommended that Brexit could be used as a way to increase rights protections in NI.

“Brexit gives us a clean slate – we could be adding more rights for NI citizens – this is a chance to improve.”

Last Words

Young people were then given the opportunity to say a few ‘last words’ in relation to Brexit and the workshop.

“It was kind of a stupid idea.”

“Remember it’s our future. Our future will depend on your decisions.”

“It’s not about them, it’s about us as well.”

“We are going to be the ones in future who have to deal with their decisions.”

“Is it too late for a second referendum?”

“Remember it’s our home.”

“Parents ask ‘God help’ us to stay in Northern Ireland.”

“I hope we will get to live here, here is better than Romania”

“My parents want and hope for me to do something with my life over here”

“Feel sad about Brexit because they will make us leave”

“Would English people want us to leave NI?”

“When we are informed and learn more about it, it makes us want to be more involved in what’s happening with everything around it.”

“Lots of adults in the dark about what it is – there should be a scheme for adults [to learn about Brexit] because they don’t know anything either.”

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions and recommendations are based on an analysis of the views expressed by young people through this research.

Recommendation 1

It is clear from the consultation workshops that there is a need for more factual information and education on Brexit to be made available to young people through a range of accessible channels on an ongoing basis up to and after ‘exit day’.

Despite the referendum being in June 2016, in early 2018, young people felt that they were only beginning to understand the issues. Despite the information deficit young people felt they had something to contribute, with their discussion also focusing on solutions and learning from other similar contexts, asking for example: *“Are there any solutions from other EU countries with borders with non-EU countries?”*

Recommendation 2

Across the 7 groups there was a strong call for decision makers to engage young people in the Brexit vote; to lower the voting age; and to hold a second referendum on the UK’s exit from the EU, with 16/ 17 year olds having the right vote.

As was found in our previous consultation with children and young people published in June 2017 (<http://www.childrenslawcentre.org.uk/news/children-s-voices-on-brexit>), young people are angry that they didn’t get to vote in a decision that will impact their lives for the longest time. Young people felt that if 16/17 year olds had voted in the referendum in June 2015 that the outcome would have been to remain within the European Union.

Recommendation 3

The UK government include a clause in the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill that protects the status of the Good Friday Agreement in its entirety as an international peace agreement, including the rights protections included in the Agreement, to ensure that Brexit does not negatively impact on the Peace Process in Northern Ireland.

Many young people also raised the issue of the Brexit campaign being based on ‘lies’ and misinformation and questioned the legitimacy of the referendum outcome on that basis. A number of young people also expressed frustration that the potential impact on Ireland was ignored during the referendum campaign and felt that the wishes of people in NI were still being ignored. Young people were extremely worried about ‘losing’ the Good Friday/ Belfast Agreement and the protection of equality and peace here as a potential impact of Brexit.

Recommendation 4

Clarity from the UK government and accessible information on arrangements for EU and non-EU migrants post Brexit is required as a matter of urgency.

Young people from the Polish and Roma communities were worried that they may have to leave NI as a result of Brexit. Young Polish and Roma people were also worried about family members living in their country of origin would not be able to visit them post-Brexit.

Recommendation 5

The young people consulted felt that there should be no hard border in Ireland, freedom of movement should not be restricted and that the Common Travel Area should be maintained between Ireland and the UK; and the rights of Irish children resident in the UK and the rights of British children resident in Ireland should be specifically protected.

In relation to the Irish border, children and young people identified a range of impacts if there was a hard border in Ireland, including an increase in travel time, disruption getting to school, visiting friends or accessing services across the border, the impact of needing a passport to travel a few miles and the associated consequences if they could not afford a passport. Young people also identified the risk of an increased presence of paramilitaries in border areas. Young people also spoke of the impact of a hard border may have on their daily lives including their sense of wellbeing, relationships, sense of identity and belonging.

Recommendation 6

Young people recommended that arrangements should continue post-Brexit in relation to ERASMUS, the mutual recognition of qualifications across Europe and access to education across borders.

Recommendation 7

Additionally, arrangements currently in place that provide for cross border healthcare should continue, including Extra Contractual Referrals, specialist services delivered on an all-island basis and allowing people to access health services closest to home, regardless of the jurisdiction.

Recommendation 8

In relation to children who were born in Northern Ireland who can hold Irish citizenship by virtue of the Good Friday Agreement, the British Government must fully protect and future proof the EU rights of those children and provide clarity as to how it will facilitate those children to continue to fully exercise their rights and fully enjoy the benefits of EU citizenship post-Brexit.

Furthermore, the Government must ensure that Irish children living in the UK, and British children living in Ireland continue to be able to access services on an equal footing. These rights should be fully considered and clearly protected in any settlement relating to Irish children residing in the UK and British children living in Ireland.

The issue of citizenship was discussed at length within the consultation workshops in relation to what it will mean on a practical basis to hold an Irish passport versus a British passport, particularly in relation to freedom of movement rights.

To that end, CLC would endorse the Joint Committee of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission recommendations that:

- The Joint Committee believes that the offer of continued EU citizenship – or equivalent rights – should be extended to at least all the ‘people of Northern Ireland’ as defined by the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement 1998.
- The Joint Committee seeks an explicit guarantee that people in Northern Ireland may continue to identify themselves as they choose, without any diminution of rights, so that any choice of identity is not based on fear of practical consequences post-Brexit.
- Parties to the negotiations should reflect on the risk of creating different categories of residents and rights holders in Northern Ireland, in order to avoid divisiveness or unfair distinctions.¹⁴

Recommendation 9

The young people we spoke to were very clear in relation to the benefits of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) and called for the EHIC arrangement to continue post-Brexit.

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[http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/Joint Committee Statement on the UK Withdrawal from the European Union.pdf](http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/Joint_Committee_Statement_on_the_UK_Withdrawal_from_the_European_Union.pdf) page 8

Recommendation 10

CLC would therefore call on the UK Government to provide a guarantee that HM Treasury will replace gaps in funding as a result of Brexit, with particular focus on streams of funding that invest in children and young people.

There was recognition of the huge benefits that EU funding brings to NI.

Recommendation 11

Young people acknowledged an increase in tensions in NI, which has particularly been directed at migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, with a number of young people commenting that Brexit has given people the excuse to be racist.

CLC would therefore support NICCY's recommendation that:

In addition to considering the impact of Brexit on nationality, it will be important to consider how people of different ethnicities may be affected.

Governments should run campaigns and fund public awareness programmes on diversity and non-discrimination and provide information on issues relating to discrimination.¹⁵

Recommendation 12

CLC would call for arrangements that assist policing and child protection, including the European Arrest Warrant to be maintained.

The young people consulted also recognised the benefits of European Union membership in relation to networks that share information on criminal offenders, the European Arrest Warrant, food and safety standards, networks that share information in relation to scientific and medical research and the abolition of EU roaming charges.

Recommendation 13

Young people were also keen that the UK continue to have access to EU networks in relation to medical and scientific research.

Recommendation 14

Young people felt that the UK government should come to an arrangement with the EU to ensure that telephone roaming charges were not reintroduced.

¹⁵ <http://www.niccy.org/media/2991/brexit-full-report-nov-17.pdf> page 27

FINAL CONCLUSION

The issues raised by young people through this consultation process reflect and are consistent with our findings from previous research (June 2017). The majority of young people consulted were fearful, confused and worried about how much they feel they will lose when the UK exits the EU, particularly in relation to future economic and education opportunities. In particular the findings further underline that it is imperative that the views of NI young people are sought and are taken fully into account in the Brexit negotiations over the coming months.

It is therefore all the more important in the absence of the NI Executive and the NI Assembly that young people's voices are heard and that issues specific to NI including rights issues are raised, considered and reflected through the Withdrawal process.

APPENDIX

Appendix

Two consultation workshop formats were developed. The first was aimed at youth groups whose membership consisted mainly of young people who were born and had grown up in Northern Ireland. This format used the introductory exercises and activities a focus on developing their knowledge and understanding of the EU. A separate format was developed for the groups of Polish and Roma young people, as we wanted them to express what it was like living here and discuss how they use a range of services, as well as tell us a little about their identity and relationship with their country of birth. Scenario-based discussions were used in all sessions, with the most relevant scenarios being used in specific, for example in the Derry/Londonderry there was a focus on the scenarios related to the border.

Consultation Workshop Plan and Resources

Introductory Activities

Sessions began with a brief introduction to Children’s Law Centre, and young people telling us about their group and some of the activities they do.

A range of introductory activities allowed young people to move around the room at their ease and voluntarily respond to several exercises, capturing some baseline information and young people’s initial thoughts on Brexit. Exercises were presented on flipchart paper, and markers and sticky dots provided as required.

‘Identity. How do you describe yourself?’

An open question, young people responded in own words.

‘What age are you?’

Flipchart sheet divided into sections with ages given. Young people placed a sticky dot, or ticked the relevant box.

‘If you hear info on Brexit, who/where does it come from?’

An open question, young people responded in their own words.

‘How informed do you feel about Brexit?’

Voting by placing coloured sticker in a box on grid:

	Referendum: June 2016	Now: March 2018
100% I get it		

Confused		
No idea		

'What words describe how you feel about Brexit?'

An open question, young people responded in their own words.

'Does Europe 'feel' near – or far way?'

Voting by placing coloured sticker in a box with the following statement and accompanying picture.

Yes! I call myself European!	I feel 'connected' to Europe
Europe is something I hear about	Europe feels far away

Introductory Activities with Polish/Roma young people

'Do you have a passport? What country does your passport say? Would you like one?'

Presented as a flow chart.

'Were you born here? Where were you born? How long have you lived here? Where did you live before? Where did your parents live before they came here?'

Presented as a flow chart so young people could follow through as appropriate.

'If someone said to you; 'Where are you from?' – what would you say?'

An open question, young people responded in their own words.

Understanding of European Union

Role of Europe – Who decides?

This activity helped young people to understand how EU law impacts our everyday lives, allowing us to talk later about the Withdrawal Bill.

Drawings to show a local council, NI Government, UK Government and the European Parliament were placed on the floor. Young people were each given a statement which they had to read out, and decide where decisions about this particular scenario are made by placing the statement by the relevant picture. When facilitated in the whole group it generated discussion, surprise and clarification.

It also ignited some questions from young people concerning how Brexit might impact their lives.

Statement	Decisions / laws pertaining to this made at which level
My cousin in Scotland is doing history as well but the topics they study seem to be different. Who decides this?	NI Government
I really wish there was a later train back from Portrush. It's nice to stay there after a day at the beach and have ice-cream. There is a train to Belfast at 10.30pm but the train to Derry is an hour earlier. Who decides on the times?	NI Government
My sister's mate has come home from Amsterdam in Holland. He studies sociology there. Sounds cool to study in Europe – how do I find out how much it costs and how to apply?	EU
Who decides on the colour, size and shape of the bananas we buy?	EU
I love dressing up for a night out. My friends and I saw some stuff on YouTube about make up being tested on animals. Is this true and who is doing anything about it?	EU
I've been working in a clothes shop in town. I love it but sometimes when we were busy over Christmas I didn't get a proper break. Who makes the rules about how long you're allowed to work for?	EU
I'm learning to drive. My Granddad says he never really wore a seat belt until he was at least 30. It's hard to think that it was like that once. Who decided we should all wear seat belts?	UK Government
I love to buy presents for my niece. They toys at the Saturday market are so much cheaper. How do I know they are safe and won't fall apart?	EU
I get really confused about when you're allowed to vote. Who decides what age we get the vote at?	UK Government
I want to get a car. My parents say it's not the cost of buying the car, but running it, e.g. putting in petrol each week. The price of petrol seems to change all the time. Who decides the price?	UK Government (tax)
Last year we were on holiday somewhere hot in Europe.	UK Government

We were in this café and my uncle started to smoke. It was so weird because he never does that at home. How come he could smoke there?	(national governments)
On our estate we park the car about three minutes' walk from the house. The street lights haven't been fixed in ages. Who can I go to and ask when they'll be fixed?	Local Council / NI Government
I want to get into DJing and someone said I should offer to do a night in the upstairs room of the pub. Apparently the pub needs a licence. Where would I find out if they have one?	Local Council
The farm up the road is getting some more building work done. Who does he apply to for permission to build another big barn?	Local Council
My aunt is in hospital. My Mum is worried because the nurses are rushed off their feet and she doesn't think my aunt is getting the attention she needs. Are there enough nurses working in the NHS?	UK Government
My brother went on this exchange programme to Poland with the Prince's Trust. I'm not sure if it'll be the same country but I want to try and get a place next year. Will it still be running?	EU

Brexit in Numbers

A number of statements and numbers were placed on the floor. A volunteer would move the papers around, as directed by the group, so that the statements and numbers matched. It would provoke lots of discussion among young people. At a mid-point a facilitator would confirm which numbers and statements were matched correctly, allowing the group to focus on the remaining ones. This was followed up with relevant discussion on each point.

The estimated number of crossing of the Irish / Northern Irish border every day.	30,000
Miles of border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.	312
Number of laws or EU regulations which need to be changed into UK law to make sure there are no gaps in our laws once the UK leaves the EU.	12,000
Number of pupils living on one side of the border and going to school or a sports club on the other side of the border.	600
Number of years the UK has been a member of the EU	44

The number of countries that will have to agree to the final terms of the UK leaving the EU.	27
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Timeline of the European Union

Presented on a length of wallpaper, this provided a visual tool to allow young people to understand how the EU came about, as well as linking it with key event such as the two World Wars, and key events for Northern Ireland. In some sessions we asked young people to place post-it notes when they, their parents or their grandparents were born to support perspective. We drew attention to the length of time it took to become a member of the EU, how the EU has evolved encouraging more integration, and the comparable shortness of the length of time in which Brexit is taking place. A line would be placed to show 'today' on the timeline, to draw young people's attention to the real-time aspect of the events depicted on the time line.

Year	Key Event
1914 - 1918	World War 1
1921	Northern Ireland formed and Irish Free State Common Travel Area formed
1939 - 1945	World War 2
1958	European Economic Community (EEC) France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg
1961	UK and Ireland apply to join the EEC
1968	'Troubles' commence in Northern Ireland
1973	UK and Ireland join the EEC
1993	EEC becomes the European Union (EU)
1998	Good Friday Agreement signed
2002	Euro currency established
2004	10 new countries join the EU
2013	UK Government promises in/out referendum on EU membership
23 June 2016	Referendum – UK votes to leave the EU Leave – 51.9% Remain – 48.1%
29 March 2017	UK triggers 'Article 50' starting 2-year process of leaving the EU
Early 2018	UK Government will pass EU Withdrawal Bill
29 March 2019	'Brexit Day' – UK will leave the EU

Scenario Discussions

A number of scenarios were developed, each reflecting a key area in which Brexit may impact the lives of young people. These were discussed in small groups in the second half of each workshop. For each scenario, young people were prompted to respond to the following questions:

1: What are the issues for children and young people?

2: Are there any possible solutions you can think of?

Family Life

Graham is 17 and goes to school in Newry. His parents are divorced. He lives with his Mum in Newry but goes to his see his Dad in Dundalk a couple of times a week. The bus takes about 30 minutes but in the car it's usually 15-20 minutes.

Health Care: Cross Border Treatment Scheme

Emma is 14 years old and lives in Mayo in the west of Ireland. Emma needs orthodontic treatment. Her teeth are badly misaligned and affect her speech, which in turn affects her confidence. She feels embarrassed, has been teased at school and doesn't engage in many social activities. She's now old enough to get braces but the waiting list is 2 years. Emma's parents have applied for her to have her treatment under the Cross-Border Treatment Scheme, an EU scheme that allows people waiting for treatment to have this in another state and reclaim some or all the costs. They have decided to take her to an orthodontist in Enniskillen.

Cost of University

Amy is 18, has just completed her A-levels in Belfast and wants to study at a university in Europe. She has budgeted for tuition fees based on her being a EU/EEA (average €4,500 per year) but is worried that when the UK leaves from the EU, she will be reclassified as a student outside the EU/EEA and face tuition fees of on average €8,600.

Recognition of qualifications

Gavin is 16 and comes from Portadown. He's doing his GCSEs this year and is interested in studying renewable sources of energy at university. He wants to apply for employment in Denmark which leads the clean technology sector. However, he's worried that Danish companies will not recognise his UK qualifications after Brexit.

Citizenship

John is 15 and has a British passport. His friends have been telling him that he should get an Irish passport if he wants to travel. John identifies as British/Northern Irish and is not sure whether or not to apply for an Irish passport.

What does a 'hard' border or a 'soft' border mean for children and young people?

The border between north and south is 312 miles long. Many people don't know where exactly the border is when they are travelling across it because you can't see it! Every day adults and young people cross back and forth over the 'soft' border between NI and the Republic for school, work, university, sports and leisure events or to visit family, without being stopped or checked or any delay. Between 20 – 30 thousand people are cross border workers.

Before the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 there was a 'hard' border i.e. militarised border checkpoints, car searches, customs controls and sometimes serious delays in getting to your destination on either side of the border. After Brexit, Northern Ireland will be the only UK country to share a physical border with an EU country. This might mean that the EU will require the British and Irish Governments to put up a 'hard border' again i.e. border checkpoints, customs controls, checking ID etc. which might need to be manned by police and customs officers.

Health: European Health Insurance Card

Emma is a fit and healthy 13 year old. She lives in Crumlin, with her parents and 2 brothers. When on holiday in Bulgaria they went to a water park where Emma went on one of the water rides. Unfortunately, she broke her right shin bone on one of the rides, and was rushed to hospital where she was examined and treated for free as she had a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

Education: Cross Border Education

Emily is 12 years old and lives in Donegal, close to the border with Derry/Londonderry. She attends her local primary school in Donegal and will be starting secondary school next year. Her parents want her to attend school in Derry/Londonderry as it is the closest school, and Emily wants to go to the school.

European Funding for Youth Projects

Ryan is 15 years old and lives in Belfast. He's been finding school really difficult and isn't sure if he'll actually make it through his GCSE years. He goes to the local youth club and is interested in web design and maybe doing stuff on animation and gaming. He goes down to an employability information day at a youth organisation in Belfast city centre. The youth worker he speaks to says there's an organisation which does on-the-job training and seems like it would suit Ryan. The youth worker also says he could do his Essential Skills through a personal development / employability programme and then do a few more GCSEs part-time at Belfast Met.

Ryan thinks these programmes would suit him much better. He decides to talk to the youth worker at his youth club about it – she is really encouraging.

However, the next week she asks for a chat and says that the media and youth organisations might not be able to run programmes next year because the future of the funding (European Social Fund - ESF) is really uncertain.

What is it like living here? (Polish and Roma young people)

This activity was used with the Polish and Roma groups. Pictures were provided on A3 paper to stimulate discussion about daily life here, access to and use of services. A range of questions were provided to stimulate discussion around the different themes.

1: Education and Healthcare

- Do you go to school, what do you like about it? What helps you to study, what are your career aspirations.
- Do you look forward to going back to school after holidays? How do you get to school? Have you made friends?
- Have you ever been to the GP or hospital? What was it like? Do you go for check-ups?

2: Housing

- Do you like where you live? Do they live with just your family or extended family?
- Is it important that you live near to other Roma/Polish people?
- Is all of your family here? Are there some of your family who would like to come and join you here?

3: Community

- What activities do you do? Do you go to youth club, kids club? Where are they?
- Do you play football, go to the park, or use the swimming pool?
- Where are your favourite places to hang out? Café, pool, park, Roma Community Centre, Polish school, church etc.
- Do you feel accepted here? Are there any things you get concerned about (e.g. hate crime etc.)

4: Coming and Going (Freedom of Movement)

- Have you used the boat or the plane? Where did you go?
- Have you travelled back home to see your family / have they come to visit?
- Are there any members of your family that you would like to come and live here with you?
- Do you ever visit other areas in Northern Ireland? What does that feel like?

Messages for Government

In the closing section of each consultation session, the young people were thanked for working hard, and for telling us their views, questions and perspectives. We informed the young people about why we collected the information, and how it would be collated with information other young people gave us, and finally how it would be used by the Children's Law Centre. Young people were finally asked to tell us what their 'Messages for Government' were.