

Brief for Minister on progress on Arts-in-Education Charter

The Minister is meeting this afternoon with Jan O Sullivan, Minister for Education and Skills for the presentation of the 3rd Progress Report by the Implementation Group. The Charter includes a provision for the Implementation Group to report twice a year to both Ministers. At the meeting, Professor John Coolahan, Chair of the Implementation Group will present the Report to the Ministers.

Implementation Group

The Charter was launched in January 2013. At its launch, a High Level Implementation Group was appointed to oversee its implementation.

The membership of the Implementation Group is

- Professor John Coolahan (Chair)
- Orlaith McBride (Director of the Arts Council),
- Mary Nunan (Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick),
- Katie Sweeney (Department of Education and Skills)
- Niall O 'Donnchú (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht).
- Kathleen Hannigan is Secretary to the Group (DAHG)

Professor John Coolahan

Dr. John Coolahan is Chair of the Arts-in-Education Implementation Group and Professor Emeritus at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He has lectured extensively in Ireland and abroad.

Progress on Objectives of the Charter

Since the last report in April 2014, the Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by both Departments. Since making the last report, the Implementation Group has met seven times. The following is a summary of the report presented by Prof. Coolahan at today's meeting.

From its inception the Group has engaged in meetings with key agencies in the arts and education sectors and has had communications with, and submissions from a range of interested groups. The Group has reported that there continues to be a great support and enthusiasm for the Charter and there is a strong desire among agencies to be actively involved in the realisation of the commitments. The Group has noted and welcomed a spirit of collaboration and co-operation between agencies. People's expectations have been raised by the Charter and the Group considers it vital for the well-being of the sector that the hopes and aspirations come to fruition.

The summary of the work of the Implementation Group and associated partners, indicates that much action has been initiated to promote the range of commitments set out in the Charter. While it is very much work in progress, the Group has been anxious to lay sure foundations for sustainable action into the future on the various commitments. While action on all the commitments is important, the Group highlighted a number of key initiatives which now need to be brought into tangible activity and be

seen to contribute to the changing scenario for the arts-in-education. A great deal of the preparatory groundwork has been done on these but their development over the next months is crucial to support raised public expectations.

Areas of priority for the Implementation Group are the achievement of the following:-

- The arts-in-education Portal website
- The Arts Rich School Scheme
- Mapping/ Directions of all arts-in-education activities in existence
- Co-ordination/ presentation of the research data on arts-in-education
- Up-dating of the Artists Schools Guidelines
- Development of the Local Arts-in-Education Partnerships
- Sustaining the Teacher/Artist Programme in arts-in-education for artists and teachers

The combined impact of the successful launch of these initiatives, over the medium term, would be of historic significance in changing the landscape for arts-in-education in Ireland. The potential is of enormous value in achieving the Ministers' aspirations, and, if successful, will be regarded as a landmark achievement. There are challenges in bringing such a range of initiatives to fruition, but the prize of success is well worth the effort. The Group hope that improved national economic circumstances may free up some necessary financial resources to supplement the significant degree of voluntary effort being devoted to the Arts –in-Education Charter.