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3. Reviewing the Provision of Education for Young People in Detention in Northern Ireland: Rights, Research and Reflections on Policy and Practice

At A Glance

This paper provides an ‘at a glance’ look at the key conclusions of the third Report of the Children and Youth Programme which adopts a rights-based approach to the provision of education for young people in detention in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The objectives of the Report are to:

- identify the rights for children and young people in custody to education in Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- analyse and review the legal and policy provisions for the educational needs of children and young people in custody;
- highlight research evidence and data in relation to the voice and educational experiences of young people in custody and identify gaps in existing provision;
- explore new strategies of providing education in custody and make recommendations for policy development and implementation.

The Report outlines the relevant rights instruments and standards for the education of young people in detention and provides a profile of children in the youth justice system with reference to education. The Report further documents the legislative and policy context for the provision of education of young people in Ireland and Northern Ireland and highlights areas of concern. Finally, the Report assesses the role of education for young people in detention and explores educational provision, drawing concluding messages for policy in relation to custodial education and well-being of young people.



Key Conclusions

Drawing on the evidence the following key conclusions have been identified.

1. The current arrangements for young people in custody in Ireland and Northern Ireland are falling short of the standards of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations rules and the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.
2. Improved co-ordination and information sharing between government departments and key service providers which are critical to meet the rights and needs of young people in custody.
3. Collaborative partnerships between places of custody and external education and training agencies are crucial to improve the re-integration of young people post custody.
4. Data collection on young people in custody is underdeveloped, sparse and needs to be progressed to identify gaps and provide comprehensive data to inform educational outcomes and pathways for young people in custody.
5. Dedicated training of educational staff and development of pedagogical approaches are essential to realise the rights and educational needs of young people in custody, both to improve educational outcomes and decrease the possibility of re-offending.

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The Children and Youth Programme

The Children and Youth Programme is an independent collaboration between the two UNESCO Chairs in Ireland at the University of Ulster and NUI Galway.



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