



## Proposal for Youth Focus Group selection criteria

### *Aim:*

To select a defined number of focus groups to conduct between now (July 2007) and early September 2007.

### *Parameters:*

These focus groups will be selected on the basis of:

- ensuring that the groups selected are as representative of the population/community of young people in Ballymun as possible,
- allowing for what is practical in the time remaining (2.5 months) and other procedures to be carried out (key informant interviews, service provider focus groups, etc),
- that the maximum number of focus groups to be carried out will be eight groups, in keeping with the approved number stated in the ethics submission (i.e. 6-8 groups).

### *Characteristics of each group:*

1. It is proposed that the groups consist of pre-formed groups – i.e. groups of young people who are already known to each other and have a good history of working together on such projects. It is felt that bringing strangers together in the context of Ballymun to talk about a subject as sensitive as mental health may be unproductive in terms of our desired outcomes.
2. Following from point one, the advice of local and relevant service providers is of paramount importance in terms of selecting (“cherry picking”) the participants for each group. Please reference the inclusion and exclusion criteria for guidance regarding same.
3. Groups should be small, consisting of between 4 and 6 young people.
4. Focus groups will be conducted in line with the protocol set out in Appendix C of the ethics submission (Youth Focus Groups). Facilitators should be cognizant of the possibility of only accessing ‘surface answers’ in each group, and should endeavour to probe deeper where it is felt that the core of the issue is not being addressed.

### *Proposed representative groups:*

- School groups

- (i) Trinity Comprehensive students from Ballymun

(ii) Students from Ballymun attending school outside of Ballymun

- Travellers
  - High achievers
  - Early school leavers
  - Young people with some experience of the Criminal Justice System
  - Young People with experience of the Mental Health system (*under advice of service provider*)
  - Non-Irish cultures represented in Ballymun
- It is believed that the views expressed by participants from the younger end of our target age range will be different from those expressed by older participants. It is therefore suggested that at least one focus group be conducted with those in the 12-15 age group, and at least one be conducted with 16-18 year olds.
- It is believed there is value in conducting at least one single-sex group for both genders. If this is to be the case, it is suggested that the facilitator be of the same gender as the participants. Headstrong/Reach will endeavour to provide the facilitators for these groups, however in the event that this is not possible a suitable candidate from the local community of service providers will be sought. The local community of providers will be instrumental in selecting the appropriate person to fill this role.

Proposed focus group specifications:	
Schools – Trinity Comprehensive	12 – 15 year olds males  16 – 18 year old females
High achievers and young people from Ballymun attending schools outside Ballymun	Mixed gender, older age range
Travellers	Possibly two single sex groups, will take advice from appropriate professional regarding best outcomes.
Early school leavers	Mix gender, younger age range
Young people with experience of Mental Health system	Mix gender, possibly older age range due to sensitivity/maturity needed in relation to sensitive issues
Other cultures	Mix gender, age range dependant on availability