



Youth Work Ireland

Youth Work Ireland Policy Brief Autumn 2015

European Youth Policy

The EU Youth Strategy, agreed by EU Ministers, sets out a framework for cooperation covering the years 2010-2018. The strategy ranges across eight areas including education, training, employability, health and global issues. The 2015 EU Youth Report was published on 15 September 2015. It presents a full picture of the situation of young people in Europe and how policymakers have addressed it in the period 2013-2015.



The EU Youth Report summarises the results of the first work cycle of the EU Youth Strategy (2010-12) and proposes priorities for the next 3 years. It presents statistics on how the financial crisis has affected the situation of young people in the EU. The report provides comprehensive research and data across all the relevant policy areas and is thus of great benefit to those working in the field with an interest in the European dimension. A series of national reports from responsible ministries also fed in to the process and these are also available on the website.

[EU Youth Report 2015](#)

Youth Employment

Youth unemployment continued to fall in September which is good news. A closer look at some of the labour statistics shows some interesting developments relating to active labour market programmes and the flows in and out of unemployment. Long term unemployment continues to be an issue, there are now 45,173 under 25s now signing on. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has also launched a funding round for youth organisations interested in doing work in relation to youth employability measures. The finding is under the umbrella of the Dormant Accounts fund so is effectively once off for amounts of up to €40,000



[CSO figures](#)

[Youth Employability Initiative Dormant Accounts](#)

Lobbying

The registration of lobbyists Act 2015 came in to force on September 1st. It covers voluntary organisations as well as professional ones. Anybody engaged in lobbying from this date needs to keep a record of it and make four monthly returns. “Relevant Communications” under the Act are; The initiation, development or modification of any public policy or of any public programme. The preparation or amendment of any law and the award of any grant, loan or other financial support, contract or other agreement, or of any license or other authorisation involving public funds (for example, the criteria for the award of housing grants for people with disabilities, the purchase or sale of a property or other assets by the government.) Detailed information is available on the registration of lobbyists website

[Registration of Lobbyists Website](#)



National Youth Strategy

The National Youth Strategy which draws on the Governments policy framework for children, Better Outcomes, Brighter futures, was launched on October 8th. The Strategy identifies some fifty priority actions to be delivered by Government departments, state agencies and by others, including voluntary youth services over 2015 to 2017. These actions are designed to address matters that are a high priority for young people themselves. They include issues such as access to online youth mental health services, a National Obesity Policy and Action Plan, opportunities for those young people furthest from the labour market, youth entrepreneurship initiatives in schools and youth work settings and rolling out the National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making.

[National Youth Strategy 2010-15](#)

A graphic with the text "YOUTH WORK WORKS" in pink, stylized, block letters. The text is arranged in three lines: "YOUTH", "WORK", and "WORKS".

Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, James Reilly TD gave his most recent briefing to the Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children on July 2nd. Important issues covered included the final implementation of the children’s rights referendum, legislation on children first, adoption, the aftercare bill and the role of TusLa. At the EU level the Minister participated in a public policy debate entitled Empowering young people for political participation in the democratic life of Europe. Luxembourg presented its upcoming EU Youth Presidency programme in the field of youth for July to December 2015.

[Transcript of the Ministers Presentation](#)



TusLa Funding

The advent of TusLa, the new child and family agency, was seen by many working with children and young people as a positive new departure in the field. The agency was to ensure a new integrated and focused approach to this critical work after years of scandal and investigative reports. The new agency has been a core policy priority of the new government in the area of children and young people. Inevitably there would be teething problems but what has emerged since the establishment of the agency appears more like a full blown funding crisis. There have been various estimates of the shortfall in the budget provided with most seeing it as about €60m or 10% below what is needed. Minister James Reilly made some extra provision in the budget but it remains to be seen if this will be adequate.

[RTE Report](#)

[Minister Reilly's Budget Announcement](#)



Drugs Policy

The Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children held a joint meeting with the committee on Justice covering issues of “legal highs”. A representative of the Cavan-Monaghan drug awareness project presented the findings of a report on the issues of legal highs. It was reported that two young people had died from using the substances in the last 12 months and people as young as 13 were using them. The committee further went on to examine the broader issue of drugs policy with Minister of State O’Riordain. The Minister spoke of the need to examine harm reduction approaches to addiction and his concern at the changing nature of psychoactive drugs like “legal highs”. Dormant accounts funding for projects was also announced at the meeting. The Minister was encouraged by the development of Naloxone to combat addiction and spoke to the need to prepare the ground for the next strategy which needed to be very focused.

[Legal Highs Hearing](#)

[Drugs Strategy Hearing](#)



Budget 2016

Budget 2016 was heralded as the first in a series symbolising Ireland’s emergence in to a sustained recovery. The possibility of some relief for young people and those working with them was real. Both Youth Work Ireland and the NYCI highlighted the priorities that could have been addressed by a Government with €1.6bn to distribute. However, many were disappointed with the results. While some increases were granted for the work of youth services these are well short of what any type of recovery would look like. Other areas like youth unemployment and mental health received little or no attention.

[Youth Work Ireland Budget Submission](#)

[NYCI Budget Submission](#)

[Youth Work Ireland post Budget Press Release](#)



Shadow UN Report on Children's Rights



The United Nations reviews Ireland's performance under the UN Convention on Children's Rights from time to time. The Children's Rights Alliance has prepared a civil society report 'Are We There Yet?' to help the UN in its task. This report gives an honest, bird's eye view of what life is like for children in Ireland and outlines where their rights are not being protected. While many children are happy and safe, the report shows the gritty reality that too many others are experiencing serious breaches of their rights and points to areas where Ireland could be doing much better.

Homelessness and increased child poverty were two of the main issues highlighted in the report neither of which is seen to have been dealt with adequately by the Government. The crisis in emergency accommodation and the continuation of the scandal of direct provision are two of the sharper ends of these problems. The problems for children and young people in our mental health system and the issue of bullying and suicide, including the extremely high rates in the LGBT community, also feature. Childhood obesity, the continuing issue with alcohol and the still too high use of tobacco by children and young people also are highlighted.

[The Report](#)

[The Process](#)

Participation Policy



Minister James Reilly TD launched Ireland's participation strategy on June. Ireland is the first country in Europe to develop a National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making. The goal of this strategy is to ensure that children and young people have a voice in decisions made about their individual and collective lives in their communities, in education, on their health and wellbeing and in legal settings. This strategy sets out measures to ensure that children are listened to, asked the right questions and better protected with actions that emphasise the importance of staff training and support.

Youth Work Ireland's Annual Conference which took place in Dublin Castle on October 3rd also focused on the issue of participation by young people in decision making. The now familiar consensus conference model ensured participation from young people, volunteers and youth workers. The event was chaired by members of Youth Work Ireland's Youth Action Group. The event also saw the launch of Youth Work Ireland's participation policy. The current Luxembourg Presidency of the EU has also placed a focus on participation by young people in political decision making during its 6-month stint at the helm of the Council of the EU.

[DCYA Strategy](#)

[Youth Work Ireland Policy](#)

[Speech by PM Bettel at the EU Youth Conference](#)

UN Youth Delegates

The UN Youth Delegate programme is organised in conjunction with the National Youth Council of Ireland and funded through Irish Aid. Orla Murphy and Eoin O’Liatháin travelled to New York in late September to join Ireland’s delegation to the United Nations, and participate in various UN events and meetings. They will also share their knowledge and experiences at events in Ireland, helping to involve young Irish people in international development policy. Their engagement is part of the [UN Youth Delegate programme](#), funded through Irish Aid. This is the first year that Ireland has participated in the UN Youth Delegate Programme. It is part of a series of events to mark the [60th anniversary of Ireland’s membership of the United Nations](#). Orla and Eoin were selected as Ireland’s first UN Youth Delegates following an extremely competitive selection process, which was launched at an [Irish Aid event with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon](#) in May 2015. Their long history of engagement in development education and global citizen initiatives really impressed the judges!

[News on delegates attendance at the UN General Assembly](#)



Garda Corporate Strategy Document 2016 – 2018

Juvenile justice is an important issue to those working with children and young people. While relations are generally good between young people and the Gardaí they can come under pressure in certain circumstances and in certain areas. There are also key areas that can involve a significant focus of Garda time on young people such as alcohol, soft drugs and public order issues. Coupled with all of this Gardaí and the Irish Youth Justice Service now support about 100 Garda Youth Diversion Projects.

It is thus extremely important that the voice of those working with children and young people is heard in the development of policy and practice in relation to policing. The Gardaí are currently developing their Corporate Strategy Document 2016 – 2018. Youth Work Ireland was pleased to make a submission to this process covering many of the issues mentioned above and more.

[Youth Work Ireland Submission to Corporate Strategy Document 2016 - 2018](#)



UN European Economic and Social Committee

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is a consultative body of the European Union. The Committee (EESC) was established by the Treaty of Rome in



1957. Its main function is to serve as a bridge between Europe and organised civil society, therefore allowing for the representation of various economic and social interest groups. The EESC contributes to strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the EU as it is the only EU body made up of citizens and not politicians.

Committed to European integration, the EESC contributes to strengthening the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union by enabling civil society organisations from the Member States to express their views at European level. Ireland has nine places on the EESC and nominations are divided between the three constituent Groups of the EESC: Employers; Employees; and Various Interests. Recently the representation on the committee has been broadened to include a more diverse range of groups. Youth Work Ireland was pleased to be asked by Government to nominate one of Ireland's representatives and Michael Mc Loughlin was appointed in October. Michael is Head of Advocacy and Communications with Youth Work Ireland and has a significant background in EU affairs.

[Website of the European Economic and Social Committee](#)

