



Youth Work Ireland

'be part of it'

Policy Brief

Welcome to our first policy brief

In order to better inform thinking and knowledge on policy issues around the organisation we are aiming to forward you a quarterly Policy Brief on issues relevant to the areas of youth and children. These will be brief updates on current developments in national policy which you may find useful. The format will also provide a link for further and more in depth information on the topic in question. This is the first Youth Work Ireland Policy Brief and we would be most grateful for any feedback you might have

1. Children's Referendum

Youth Work Ireland played a significant role in the Yes Campaign for the Referendum with very limited resources. Members around the country provided tangible and visible support to the Yes for Children Campaign Bus in a number of locations. We supplied leaflets and posters to all members to ensure our position was visible and understood locally. We also supported and worked with the Yes for Children Campaign nationally. We took part in the Big Ballot exercise in association with UNICEF Ireland, SPUNOUT.ie, Foroige and NYCI. We ran a vigorous social media campaign particularly in the last few days following the Supreme Court Ruling. We also called for a more considered approach to maintain Saturday voting after the low turnout in the Referendum. The passing of the Children's Rights Referendum will see the enactment of the previously published Adoption Bill and it is promised new legislation on Children's voices in proceedings which affect them.

[Draft Adoption \(Amendment\) Bill 2012](#)

[Youth work Ireland Press Release on Maintaining Saturday Voting](#)

[Dail Question to Frances Fitzgerald on Children and Young Peoples Strategy](#)

2. Employment and the European Youth Guarantee

The momentum towards this initiative is growing with the recent endorsement by French President Francois Hollande. Joan Burton as Minister for Social Protection has also indicated that it will be a priority for the Irish Presidency. Much of the work has been done by the European left as a counter balance to the Europe wide approach of austerity. The European Commission will publish its proposals on the European Youth Guarantee in early December. These will be non-binding but very much inform the work of the Council of Ministers in developing the concept. Minister Joan Burton has discussed the issue at a previous meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Education and Social Protection

[Youth Work Ireland Welcomes the Commitment to a Youth Guarantee but Capacity Needs to be Built](#)

[ILO Leader Calls for A Youth Guarantee](#)

[Dail Question to Frances Fitzgerald on EU Policies](#)

[A debate in the Dail on Community Employment Schemes](#)

[Latest Parliamentary Question on Community Employment](#)

[Minister for Social Protection Joan Burton TD at the Joint Oireachtas Committee before the October EPSCO Meeting](#)

3. [Budget 2013](#)

Youth Work Ireland has made a budget submission calling for an exemption to cuts for services to children and young people. Interestingly the new Dutch Government has instituted precisely such an approach to the Education budget in The Netherlands. We have set out how an adjustment of €3.5bn can be accomplished without cuts to services for children and young people. However such an approach inevitably entails a change to the balance of spending cuts and taxation by the Government but such a change is allowed by the Troika. There are substantial “big ticket” items either committed to or rumoured which would mean significant revenue or savings for the Government such as changes to pensions relief, changes to USC for higher earners, savings in the capital programme, Croke Park Agreement savings and a site valuation tax.

[The Time has Come – Budget 2013 Submission from Youth Work Ireland](#)

4. [Children's First and Child Protection](#)

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on health and Children has published a report on the proposed Children’s First legislation after consultation on the Heads of the Bill. The Bill is part of a number of initiatives taken by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Justice coupled with the establishment of the Child and Family Support Agency, The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012 and the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act. These all impose significant duties on frontline workers and services and youth services need to be sure they are aware of them.

[Children’s First Heads of Bill](#)

[Report of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children on Children’s First Heads of Bill Criminal Justice \(Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Bill 2012 – Explanatory Memorandum](#)

[Criminal Justice \(Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Act 2012](#)

[National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Bill 2012 – Explanatory Memorandum](#)

5. [Frances Fitzgerald at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children](#)

Minister Frances Fitzgerald appeared at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children on October 18th. The meeting covered a wide range of issues including the Children’s Referendum, Saint Patrick’s Institution, Adoption, The Child and Family Support Agency and the “As We See it” Report. Given the timing of the appearance the Children’s Referendum rather dominated the discussions with the committee. The issue of representation of young people at the Constitutional Convention was raised by opposition deputies with whom Youth Work Ireland had raised the issue. The Children's and Young People's Policy Framework was also raised.

[The Committees Deliberations](#)

6. Education and Training Boards

The Bill is going through the Oireachtas at the moment. The bulk of the legislation involves establishing the infrastructure and procedures for the 16 new Education and Training Boards which are to subsume the VECs and the FAS training functions locally. The original Heads of Bill made no mention of the role of these bodies in relation to youth work. This is remedied to some degree in the actual legislation but the dominant content is still relating to the structures of the ETBs and their role in schools and further education and training. We will be seeking a more explicit reference to youth work and the processes in the 2001 Youth Work Act at committee stage

[Education and Training Boards Bill 2012 – Explanatory Memorandum](#) [The Dail Debate](#)

7. Constitutional Convention

The Government announced the appointment of Mr. Tom Arnold as Chairperson of the Constitutional Convention and the Convention will meet for the first time on December 1st. Youth work Ireland believes that the exclusion of people under the age of 18 is a mistake and this has been raised in a number of fora. We have written to the Chairperson in relation to this matter and have held a meeting with the Secretary to the Convention. There is very much an open door to methods for involving young people in the work and we have agreed to revert to the Convention in this regard in the near future.

[The Conventions Website](#) (seems to currently link to previous all party committee)
[Press Release from Youth Work Ireland and Voices of Youth](#)
[The Governments Position on the Constitutional Convention](#)

8. Sexual Offences

Youth Work Ireland has developed a draft position paper on Young People and the Law on Sexual Offences and is currently consulting with members and other interested parties. The text is available [here](#)

9. Community Employment

There was a topical debate on this subject in the Dail on October 15th available [here](#)

10. Cyber Bullying

There was a debate in the Dail [here](#) and the Seanad passed a motion on Bullying; the text and debate are [here](#), the Minister for Education responded to more general questions [here](#) and [here](#)

11. National Lottery

We are monitoring the fairly substantial changes proposed and hope to work with other recipients on this matter.

[Youth Work Ireland Press Release on the Subject
Dail Question to Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin TD](#)

12. Garda Vetting

The Current Situation is set out in a Parliamentary Question [here](#)

ENDS

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