



Youth Work Ireland

'be part of it'

Policy Brief

Welcome to our second Policy Brief – Spring 2013

1. Community Employment and Employment Schemes

The Department of Social Protection has announced additional places on the Community Employment Programme and other labour market measures. The Minister has also established an Employment Schemes Advisory Committee to examine and advise on the future of employment schemes operated by the Department. A stakeholder consultation based on a major review document took place on February 18th. Invitations have also been made to a limited number of organisations to apply with innovative proposals for CE Projects.

[Community Employment Financial Review of Schemes](#)

[A Review of Department of Social Protection Employment Support Schemes](#)

2. Youth Guarantee and Youth Unemployment

The new EU Budget contains some €6bn to be focussed on the introduction of a Youth Guarantee. Funding will come from the European Social Fund and other areas and countries with high youth unemployment will be prioritised for the initiative which aims to guarantee all young people under 25 and offer of a job, training or quality work experience within four months of being unemployed or leaving school or college. The Guarantee will formally be adopted at the EPSCO meeting in Dublin on February 28th. It may take some time for the commitment to translate in to measures on the ground however.

[Irish Presidency on the Youth Guarantee](#)

[Ministers back €6bn pledge on youth jobs](#)

[Sinn Fein's Kathryn Reilly on Youth Unemployment](#)

[Oireachtas Committee Report on Youth and Long Term Unemployment](#)

3. Constitutional Convention

The Constitutional Convention will meet throughout the year. The January meeting voted in favour of reducing the voting age but was not decisive as to what particular age. Youth Work Ireland will host a Children's and Young Persons Constitutional Convention on April 20th in the Mansion House

and Tom Arnold the Chair of the Convention will attend. A web based application process will be launched in March

[The Constitutional Convention](#)

[The Children's and Young Persons Convention](#)

4. Child and Family Support Agency

One of the major tasks of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs following the referendum on Children is the establishment of the Child and Family Support Agency. This will be the second biggest state agency in the country after the HSE and will have a staff of over 4,000 and a budget of over €550 million. The basic schema of the agency was set out in a task force report in July 2012 and senior staff have been appointed including Gordon Jeyes as the Director and a separation of functions within the HSE has taken place. However the heads of Bill agreed by Government have not been published and presumably it will take some time before the legislation is published which means the agency will exist in a shadow form for a while to come.

[Report of the Task Force on the Child and Family Support Agency](#)

[Dáil Questions on the Establishment of the Child and Family Support Agency](#)

5. Further Education and Training

In January the Dail debated an opposition motion on Further Education and Training. At committee stage the Education and Social Protection Committee considered the ETB Bill and the minister provided commitments in the like application of provisions in the 2001 Youth Work Act in the new ETB legislation. The Further Education and Training Bill which will formally establish Solas was published in January

[Education and Social Protection Sub-Committee Debate on Committee Stage of the ETB Bill](#)

[Debate on Private members Bill on further Education and Training](#)

[Further Education and Training Bill 2013](#)

6. Funding and CRE

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has communicated that there will be a 10% cut across all main youth work funding headings in 2013. The Department has claimed that this decision is consistent with the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure. The CRE document however referred to a number of reviews and examinations which have not taken place. Similarly it was argued funding could be routed through local VECs for greater efficiency yet almost the opposite has transpired with funding being routed through the City of Dublin Youth Service Board

[Dail question on youth work funding](#)

[Youth Work Ireland Press Release on Funding](#)

7. Garda Vetting

Garda vetting of staff has long being an issue for those in the youth work sector. Delays in this critical area can cause huge problems for local projects and clubs in terms of staff and volunteers. The new Garda Vetting Bureau legislation now makes vetting a requirement for huge areas of work dealing with children and young people. After a lot of pressure the Department of Justice has provided extra staff for the Vetting Unit in Thurles.

[Department of Justice Press Release](#)

8. [OECD](#)

Youth Work Ireland met with the OECD to discuss youth unemployment issues in February as part of the OECD's work on the topic. The meeting covered a range of areas such as the capacity of the Irish system to provide for a European Youth Guarantee, the economic impact of emigration and the changes to the further education and training system.

[OECD Publication on Youth Unemployment](#)

9. [Erasmus for All](#)

There is an on-going debate at European level about the future of the EU youth programmes. The Commission had proposed merging a number of funding lines to create a new ERASMUS for all funding programme. Lobbying by several NGOs, member states and the European Parliament has ensured that there will still be a distinct youth chapter in the future programme although the name may remain as is

[European Youth Forum Campaign Page](#)
[Commission Proposal on ERASMUS for All](#)

10. [Child Protection](#)

Despite considerable efforts it appears the placing of Children First on a statutory footing is still some distance away

[Dail Question on Children First](#)
[Dail Question on "Soft Information"](#)

11. [Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Good Friday Agreement](#)

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement has taken quite an interest in the situation of young people north and south of late. In December a joint delegation from Youth Work Ireland and Youth Action Northern Ireland made a presentation to the Committee which is chaired by Joe Mc Hugh TD

[Transcript of Meeting with Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation Good Friday Agreement](#)