Press Release
Youth Work Ireland
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Youth services may need to scale back work if staffing and inflation pressures not addressed in Budget 2025

Local Youth Services are under extreme pressure to recruit and retain staff due to funding decisions made by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and may need to scale back their work in 2025 if these issues are not addressed according to Youth Work Ireland. The federation of 20 local youth services, working with almost 100,000 young people, has sounded alarm bells in its 2025 Budget Submission relating to difficulties in attracting and retaining youth workers due to pay restoration recommendations for other organisations. Similarly, the group has highlighted how frontline youth services faced increases of over 50% in some key day to day expenses in recent years while state funding increased at about 2%. The organisation also wants to see a proper capital fund for youth work providing key infrastructure and buildings for a growing youth population.

"Increases to the main youth schemes supported by the DCEDIY are now falling significantly behind other groups who have been supported to meet inflationary and pay demands after a significant WRC ruling last October. Projects have had increases of 2% annually while other community groups have effectively received increases to cover staffing of 8%. We need to avoid a two-tier system for community groups doing vital work locally and Government should not create such inequalities. While the headline inflation figure for 2023 was 8.5% the CSO reported the most significant increases in 2003 were seen in electricity (+62.7%), and gas (+86.1%). Other frontline areas such as food & non-alcoholic beverages rose by 13.1%. Coupled with staffing costs these pressures have made the provision of the same level of service impossible next year. A staffing and inflation package is now critical for youth services" said Dr. Patrick Burke CEO of Youth Work Ireland.

"We have seen that the economy is strong, and we are producing enough wealth to deal with the major problems facing our society today. It is no longer enough to say these issues must wait. Now is the time for a real recovery that addresses the needs of young people. Many gaps need to be filled but with a positive budgetary situation now is the time to make an impact. Our national debt to national income ratio is well inside the EU guidelines and we are one of the few EU countries with budget surpluses. While some risks exist, particularly with corporate tax receipts, a growing younger population needs to be supported by our public finances. We saw €44.7bn collected in the first half of the year, a figure up more than 9pc on the same period in 2023. Some once off investments can also dovetail with budgetary strategy to hedge against the risks of unpredictable tax income. The Future Ireland Fund and the Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund should be used in imaginative and creative ways to address infrastructure deficits for young people." Dr. Burke added.

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