



Youth Work Ireland

Press Release

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May 31, 2026

“Staffing and funding issues threaten the ability of youth groups to deal with mental health, poverty and disinformation locally”, says a leading youth organisation in its budget submission.

In its budget submission today, Youth Work Ireland alerted the Government that the main youth schemes it supports are falling significantly behind those offered in the community sector. This is leading to an inability to meet inflationary and pay demands after significant WRC rulings. The group, whose members work with over 70,000 young people, believes there is a need to avoid a two-tier system for community groups doing vital work locally, and the Government should not create such inequalities. Youth services have been critically impacted by rising prices for basic items and sub-inflationary funding each year. This has gradually eroded the services' ability to have a significant programme budget. The organisation has also said that there is a need for a joined-up government strategy to provide youth spaces to combat issues in the online world.

“Our sector is losing staff and struggling to maintain services because of difficulties in attracting and retaining staff due to less favourable conditions arising from government decisions. There is no allowance for pay pressure and competition from the state and bodies covered by WRC recommendations in youth funding. Often, staff work side by side under different terms and conditions. Funders only look at their own projects, but workers are mobile. The gap is widening every year and impacting the service. This severely impacts the youth services' ability to deliver. Youth services have been critically impacted by rising prices for basic items and sub-inflationary funding each year. This has gradually eroded the services' ability to have a significant programme budget. There are a number of aspects to this, such as increased project rent costs, massive increases in energy costs, higher basic everyday costs for materials, food, transport, etc., and other newly imposed, unfunded charges, such as auto-enrolment. Once more, the year-on-year repetition exacerbates the gap.” Said Dr. Patrick Burke, CEO of Youth Work Ireland

“We are also concerned that youth policy is silent on the critical role of providing high-quality, reliable information to young people. In an era marked by misinformation and disinformation, providing trusted, youth-friendly information is more important than

ever. This work must be recognised and resourced accordingly. Looking beyond the current situation, we must be more ambitious for our young people. Youth Work Ireland is proud to lead a national campaign advocating for the right of every young person to access a youth service or support in their own community. We call for a national strategy for the provision of quality youth spaces, ensuring that youth work is delivered in environments that are safe, welcoming, and purpose-built.” Dr Burke added

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