



Youth Work Ireland

Press Release

Youth Work Ireland

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## **Post-Budget Analysis shows Department of Justice may soon overtake Education and Youth as Funder of Disadvantaged Youth Projects**

Youth Work Ireland said today that, because of different approaches to funding youth work, the Department of Justice may soon overtake the Department of Education and Youth in their respective allocations. Based on the organisation's analysis of this budget since 2022, the data show a clear structural trend: while Education and Youth remain the larger funder in 2027, youth Justice funding has grown much faster, nearly doubling over a six-year window. If this trend continues, the Department of Justice will overtake the Department of Children and Youth as the larger funder in the next Budget. Youth Work Ireland has suggested that such a development requires careful consideration of how Departments work together and what precisely the Government wishes to achieve in its policies in the area.

"We believe that the Department of Education and Youth should take the lead on youth policy as it has the official responsibility and has been a core funder historically. Unfortunately, Budget 2027 shows that an unambitious approach in this area means other aspects of Government are now playing an equally important role, and this does not seem coordinated or well thought through. An overarching policy, "Young Ireland", applies to the whole Government, and Education and Youth is responsible for the Youth aspect under the "Opportunities for Youth" policy. None of these anticipates the valuable support for those in danger of offending in conjunction with the Gardaí becoming the dominant form of funding for youth projects," Said Michael Mc Loughlin of Youth Work Ireland

"The data speaks for itself; we are witnessing a significant structural trend where youth justice funding is drastically outpacing core educational and youth service allocations. If current trajectories hold, the Department of Justice will overtake the Department of Education and Youth as the largest stakeholder in the next budget. While investing in youth justice initiatives is necessary, effective prevention must start with foundational youth work. This shift requires careful consideration from policymakers; we cannot let a fragmented, siloed approach dictate youth policy. The Government must explicitly clarify its long-term vision and ensure departments are working in lockstep to support young people before they ever reach a point of crisis." Mc Loughlin added

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Contact: Michael Mc Loughlin 087 6677499

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## Notes to the Editor

The table below tracks the funding trajectories for the **UBU Your Place Your Space** scheme and **Youth Justice Projects** from 2022 through the projected 2027 figures.

The data highlights a clear structural trend: while UBU remains the larger fund overall, Youth Justice funding has grown at a much faster rate, nearly doubling its budget over this six-year window.

## Funding Trend Comparison (2022–2027)

*All figures are presented in millions of Euros (€m).*

| Funding Scheme | 2022    | 2023    | 2024    | 2025    | 2026    | 2027 (Projected)                        | Overall Growth (2022–2027) |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| UBU Scheme     | €41.80m | €44.00m | €45.30m | €46.50m | €54.50m | <b>€58.32m</b><br><i>(with +7%)</i>     | <b>+39.5%</b>              |
| Youth Justice  | €28.00m | €30.00m | €33.00m | €35.30m | €43.00m | <b>€54.50m</b><br><i>(with +€11.5m)</i> | <b>+94.6%</b>              |

## Key Insights from the Data

- **The 2027 Convergence:** Assuming the targeted 7% increase for UBU and the €11.5 million cash injection for Youth Justice, **the spending gap narrows to just €3.82 million**. This represents a radical shift from 2022, when UBU outpaced Youth Justice allocations by nearly €14 million.