

**YOUTH
WORK
CHANGES
LIVES**



NYCI Pre-Budget Submission 2018



A Million Good Reasons

Preparing Ireland for a growing youth population

JUNE 2017

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National Youth Council of Ireland

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. It uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

www.youth.ie

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Why invest in our growing youth population?

A million good reasons to support young people to prosper and achieve their full potential:

The number of young people aged 10-24 will **increase by 11.6%** between 2015 and 2025

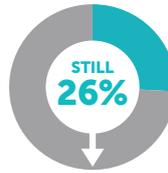


YOUTH ORGANISATIONS are active in almost **every community** reaching over

383,000 YOUNG PEOPLE



Investment in **YOUTH WORK SERVICES** from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs



BELOW LEVELS IN 2008

from **€73.1m** in 2008 to **€54m** in 2017



11,257 YOUNG PEOPLE



are now **LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED** (for 12 months or more)



The consistent **poverty rate** for **YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15-24 YEARS**

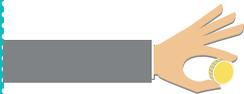


which is almost **DOUBLE**



4 in 10 YOUNG PEOPLE

aged **18-29 years** in the labour force were being paid on or below the



MINIMUM WAGE



The number of young people **aged 18-24** who are

HOMELESS was **793** in April 2017 representing a rise of



63% in the two years since March 2015



2,520 In February 2017, children and young people on a **waiting list** for **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**



over the same period in 2016

COST OF LIVING

while studying at **THIRD-LEVEL** is



€11,000 PER ANNUM



Summary of costed recommendations



In this submission, NYCI recommends to Government a number of priorities for investment in Budget 2018.

1	ENHANCE YOUTH WORK SERVICES Increase investment (current expenditure) in youth work to provide more supports and services for young people and to meet the needs of a growing youth population.	INVESTMENT €7.5m
2	HALVE LONG-TERM YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT Increase the investment in the Youth Guarantee to halve long-term youth unemployment by end 2018.	INVESTMENT €47.4m (GROSS COST)
3	EQUALITY FOR YOUNG JOBSEEKERS Restore full adult rate of €193 to young people on Jobseekers Allowance over next three budgets. In Budget 2018 increase rate for young people by €30 per week.	INVESTMENT €24m
4	EQUALITY FOR YOUNG WORKERS Abolish the sub-minimum rate of the Minimum Wage.	INVESTMENT NOT REQUIRED
5	TACKLING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS Restore full rate of Jobseekers Allowance to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	INVESTMENT €2.8m
6	ENHANCE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS AND SERVICES Invest in guidance counselling and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.	INVESTMENT €32.6m
7	EASE THE FINANCIAL BURDEN ON STUDENTS IN THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION Reduce the Student Contribution Charge by €500, to €2,500.	INVESTMENT €34m
8	GREATER CONTRIBUTION TO THE COST OF ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM Ensure retail off-licences pay more towards the cost of alcohol-related harm.	INCOME GENERATED €4.9m

Background

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for 49 voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. Our member organisations work with and for up to 380,000 young people aged 10 to 24 years in every community in Ireland with the support of 40,000 volunteers and 1,400 paid staff¹. NYCI functions to represent the interests of young people and youth organisations. NYCI’s role is recognised in legislation (Youth Work Act) and is represented on the National Economic and Social Council.

INTRODUCTION

The results of Census 2016² confirmed that Ireland has one of the youngest populations in Europe with one-third aged under 25, and another CSO study³ found that Ireland had the highest number of 0-14 year olds in the EU. The latest census results also show that the number of young people aged 10-24 will increase by 11.6% between 2015 and 2025 and will be just **over one million young people by 2025 (1,005,938)**. While it is true that Ireland, in line with most countries in the Western World, has a growing older population, these figures confirm that Ireland is also unique in that it has a large and growing youth population. Many countries are grappling with a declining youth population which has social and economic implications. NYCI believes that the fact that we have a large and growing youth population should be celebrated. Therefore our submission is entitled ‘A Million Good Reasons’, in that Government must deliver for our growing youth population. NYCI is calling on Government to implement a number of recommendations and policies in the 2018 Budget, to meet the needs of young people and support them to achieve their full potential.

NYCI welcomed the commitment in the 2016 Programme for Government concerning young people; which states:

“There are over 800,000 people aged 10-24 in Ireland. As these young people transition from adolescence to adulthood, primary school to secondary and further education or work, they are faced with major changes, pressures, expectations and, indeed, opportunities. We must ensure that their voice is heard, that they are respected, safe and healthy and that they meet their full potential in life and in education⁴.”



¹ Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work, Indecon Economic Consultants, NYCI, 2012 http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/Economic_Benefit_Youthwork_2012.pdf

² Census 2016, Central Statistics Office, <http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=EY007&PLanguage=0>

³ Measuring Ireland’s Progress <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-mip/mip2015/introduction/>

⁴ “A Programme for Partnership Government”, May 2016, pp78

.....

We acknowledge that some progress has been made in realising the commitment in the allocation of additional funding for youth work services and the increased welfare supports for young people in education and training in 2017. Much more needs to be done. Further investment is required to undo the damage of austerity and to meet the needs of a growing youth population. If such a commitment is to be fully realised, young people need to be supported and this should be reflected in political decisions, policy action and through increased financial support. The forthcoming budget provides an opportunity for the Government to demonstrate that commitment.

This submission puts forward a number of policy proposals designed to address key issues for young people and the youth work sector. The submission also takes into account the commitments in the Programme for Government⁵, the National Youth Strategy⁶ and our obligations under the Sustainable Development Goals⁷. In implementing these proposals, the Government will not only be supporting young people to seize opportunities and tackle challenges but will be meeting its own existing commitments and obligations.

⁵ Programme for Partnership Government, May 2016 http://www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/ImageLibrary/Programme_for_Partnership_Government.pdf

⁶ National Youth Strategy, 2015-2020 <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20151008NatYouthStrat2015to2020.pdf>

⁷ UN Sustainable Development Goals, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Youth Work Services

RECOMMENDATION:

Increase investment in youth work services

RATIONALE:

As we emerge from the economic and social crisis, one of the positive indicators is our growing youth population. Census 2016 shows that the number of young people aged 10-24 will grow by 11.6% between 2015 and 2025⁸. This will also create challenges, however, with adequate resources the youth work sector is well placed to support young people to reach their potential and make Ireland the best country in the world in which to be a young person.

Youth organisations are active in almost every community reaching over 383,000 young people. They are particularly active in supporting young people from economically or socially disadvantaged communities, with 53% of all participants coming from these areas. Youth organisations work in a range of areas such as promoting active citizenship and supporting the participation of young people in education and training. They also deliver programmes to promote positive mental health, school completion and employability and are running projects in youth justice and alcohol and drug awareness. The track record, credibility and reach of the youth sector is also demonstrated by the fact that we have the highest level of involvement in youth services in the EU, with 26% of young people active in a youth club⁹.

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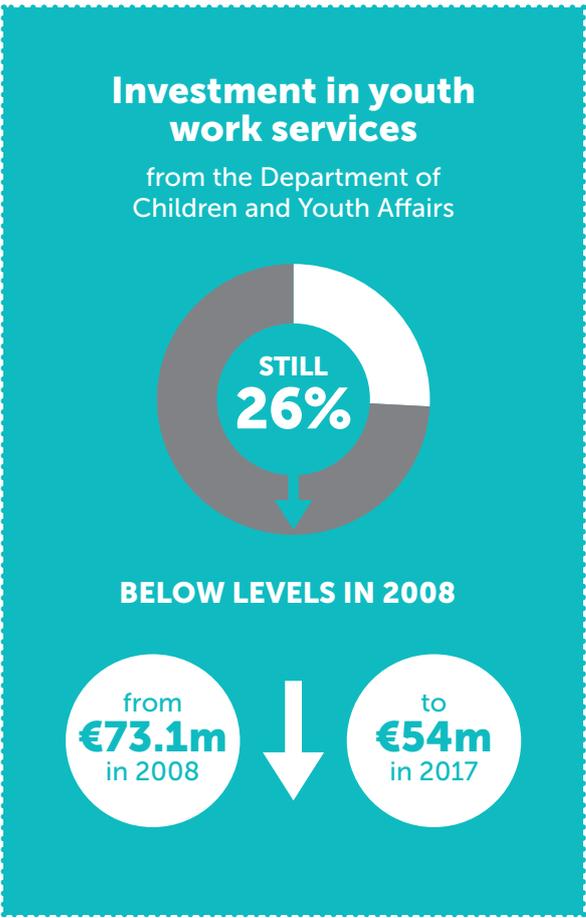


⁸ Population Estimates, CSO, <http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=EY007&PLanguage=0>

⁹ European Commission 2011, "Youth on the Move" - Analytical Report of Flash Eurobarometer Number 319a

As detailed in the Indecon Report¹⁰ for every €1 invested in youth work the economic benefit/ costs saved by the State in the long run are €2.20. This study demonstrates that investment in youth work not only supports young people to reach their full potential and become active citizens, it also reduces long-term costs for the State in relation to the health, justice and welfare services for young people. The funding provided also supports the 40,000 volunteers who work with young people.

Investment in youth work services from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs **decreased by 31.7%** over an eight year period, **from €73.1m in 2008 to €49.9m in 2015**. The decision of the Government in the last two budgets to increase investment in youth services is very welcome, in particular the €5.5m in Budget 2017 bringing the total current allocation to €54m¹¹. If we are to achieve the outcomes set out in the National Youth Strategy, to cater for the increased youth population and to meet the new regulatory demands it is vital that the Government continues to invest significantly in young people and youth work. We welcome the commitment in the Programme for Government¹² to “fund an expansion of Youth Services that support, in particular, Early School Leavers into employment and in recognising the value of such services and groups”. The recent Youth Employability Initiative where the youth sector was supported in 2016 to assist 1,000 young jobseekers was welcome. While the initial fund was once off, there was an expectation that additional funding would be available to assist more young people in securing education, training and employment. Due to a lack of funding in 2017 organisations and projects had to discontinue their work. This is unfortunate given the significant number of young people still in long term unemployment. We propose that part of the allocation of additional funding for youth work services in 2018 should include resources to support youth organisations to address youth employability.



¹⁰ Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work by Indecon Economic Consultants, November 2012
¹¹ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 269-272, <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-05-31a.642> (€57.4m minus €3.4m provision to statutory sector and public servants)
¹² “A Programme for Partnership Government”, May 2016, pp79

.....

In 2008, the investment in youth work services was €76 per young person. By 2014, this had fallen to €58 per young person. While there has been some increase in funding, the youth population is also growing significantly; therefore the actual investment in 2017¹³ comes to €59.50 per young person. The results of Census 2016 indicate that there will be 943,666 young people aged between 10-24 years in 2020. We propose that investment in youth work services should be increased to €81 per young person by 2020, which amounts to €76.5m. In order to achieve this, Government must invest an additional funding allocation €22.5m in current expenditure in the next three budgets as follows;



We believe this additional support is necessary in light of the increased youth population, the need to provide more and greater supports to young people and the additional commitments and regulatory requirements. This investment would meet Ireland’s commitment under Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

.....

INVESTMENT:

€7.5m additional investment in youth work to provide more supports and services for young people e.g. employability and to meet the needs of a growing youth population.

.....

RESPONSIBILITY:

Department of Children and Youth Affairs.



¹³ Census 2016, CSO <http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=EY007&PLanguage=0> (908,263 young people and a budget of €54m)

Youth Unemployment

2

RECOMMENDATION:

Halve long-term youth unemployment by the end of 2018

RATIONALE:

We welcome job growth in the Irish economy and the consistent trend of reduced youth unemployment, which has decreased to 12.9% by April 2017¹⁴. We are concerned, however, about the **11,257 young people¹⁵ who are now long-term unemployed (for 12 months or more)**. This is worrying in light of the commitments in the EU Youth Guarantee to provide any young person an education, training and/or work experience place if they were unemployed for four months or more. NYCI broadly welcomed the Irish plan for the Youth Guarantee¹⁶ when it was published in January 2014. As we outlined to both the Oireachtas and the European Court of Auditors¹⁷, NYCI is concerned at the overall slow pace of implementation three and a half years into the process. We concur with the report of the European Court of Auditors¹⁸ on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee scheme in Ireland. They found that the results to date from the Youth Guarantee in Ireland had fallen short of expectations. They noted that the Irish Youth Guarantee programme excludes 30% of the young people 'not in education, employment and training' (NEET) which is significant given that Ireland had the 8th highest number of NEETS in the EU27. They also found that in 2015, less than half (48%) of the young unemployed people accessed education, training and work experience within the 4 month timeframe compared to an average of 70% across all 7 member states. NYCI agrees with this analysis and in our opinion it demonstrates that the Youth Guarantee scheme in Ireland needs to be reviewed and revised. The scheme needs to focus in particular on responding to the needs of the long-term unemployed. As the economy recovers and employment grows, it is important not to leave this cohort behind.

We are calling on Government to commit to reducing the number of young people under 26 who are long-term unemployed, to fewer than 5,000 by the end of 2018. It is vital we support young jobseekers into education, training and work experience and prevent the drift into long-term joblessness. This will require a renewed focus on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and the provision of additional education and training places.

¹⁴ CSO, Monthly Unemployment Report, April 2017, <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/mue/monthlyunemploymentapril2017/>

¹⁵ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions, 31 May 2017 183-184 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-05-04a.354>

¹⁶ Implementation Plan of the EU Council Recommendation on the Youth Guarantee <http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guarantee-implementation-plan.pdf>

¹⁷ NYCI Presentation to the European Court of Auditors, February 11 2016

¹⁸ European Court of Auditors, Special Report, No 5/2017 <http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=41096>

NYCI recommends an additional investment of €47.4m in Budget 2018 to reduce the number of young people long term unemployed by the end of 2018. This is based on the average cost of a SOLAS training place¹⁹ of €7,578. To provide 6,257 places would require an investment of €47.4m. This is the gross cost, as this investment would lead to reduced social welfare payments given more young people move into employment. For example, if there were 6,257 fewer young people on €102.70, the lowest rate of Jobseekers Allowance, this would save €33.4m per annum. This proposal, if implemented, would contribute to Ireland's commitment under Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

11,257 
YOUNG PEOPLE

are now
LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED



INVESTMENT:

€47.4m gross cost to halve long-term youth unemployment (€14m net cost).

RESPONSIBILITY:

Department of Employment and Social Protection.



¹⁹ <https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Youth-Guarantee-Implementation-Plan.pdf> pp26

Social Protection for Young Jobseekers

3

RECOMMENDATION: Equality for young people on Jobseekers Allowance

RATIONALE:

NYCI supports full equality for young people. We opposed the decision of previous Governments to reduce welfare payments to young unemployed people under 26 years of age and we want the full rates to be restored. We do acknowledge and welcome the decision of Government in Budget 2017, to restore the full adult rate to young people engaged in education, training and work experience. This was in line with a recommendation made by NYCI since 2014. Despite the progress made, we believe the imposition of lower rates on young jobseekers is contrary to the provisions of Article 40.1 of the Irish Constitution²⁰, which dictates that all citizens should be treated equally and must be addressed.

The most recent data indicates that **71% or 19,240 of the 26,808 young people in receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance (JA) in April 2017 were on €102.70 a week**, 11% or 2,863 were on €147.80 with 18% or 4,705 on the full rate of €193 per week²¹. In 2014, we published the results of a poll which found that 4 out of 10 young people on JA were struggling to make ends meet²². This is not surprising as the Vincentian Partnership found that the cost of a single adult living as part of a household was €184²³ in 2014 and this does not take into account the financial burden on young people who are not living with parents or family.



²⁰ Irish Constitution http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Historical_Information/The_Constitution/February_2015_-_Constitution_of_Ireland_.pdf

²¹ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 185, May 31 2017 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-05-31a.409>

²² NYCI Briefing Paper on Jobseekers' Allowance http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI%20Briefing%20Paper_RedC_Jobseekers%27%20Allowance_Final.pdf

²³ <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B-cR3V9wzdLJSnpCVVRsSTVBeXc/edit?usp=sharing&pli=1>

TABLE 1:

Young persons under the age of 26 in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance at the end of April 2017 by rate.		0%
RATE	RECIPIENTS	
€102.70	19,240	71%
€147.80	2,863	11%
€193	4,705	18%
TOTAL	26,808	100%

The impact of these reduced payments is confirmed by the statistics on the rate of consistent poverty among young people aged 15-24²⁴. **The consistent poverty rate for young people aged 15-24 years in 2015 was 15.6%, which is almost double the overall rate of 8.7%** and the highest of all age cohorts. The percentage of young people aged 15-24 years in consistent poverty has increased by 73% between 2010 and 2015, compared to the overall increase of 40% over the same period. In addition to the data there is compelling anecdotal evidence that the cuts are leading to youth homelessness. NYCI is calling on the incoming Government to reverse these cuts over the next three Budgets, beginning in Budget 2018. This proposal, if implemented, would contribute to Ireland's commitment under Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

In Budget 2018, NYCI calls on Government to increase the Jobseeker's Allowance rate for 18-24 year olds from €102.70 to €132.70 and for 25 year olds from €147.80 to €177.80. According to information provided by the Department of Social Protection, this recommendation would cost €24m in 2018²⁵.

INVESTMENT:

€24m as first step to restore young people to full adult rate.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Department of Employment and Social Protection.



²⁴ Social Inclusion Monitor 2015, Department of Social Protection pp42 <https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/SocialInclusionMonitor2015.pdf>

²⁵ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 176-179, March 8 2017

Equality for Young Workers

4

RECOMMENDATION:

Abolish sub-minimum rates of the minimum wage

RATIONALE:

NYCI calls on the Government to abolish the sub-minimum rates of the minimum wage in Budget 2018. We recommend that the sub-minimum rates (see Table 2) of the minimum wage should be abolished on the basis that they are discriminatory, leave young workers open to exploitation and breach Ireland's commitments under the European Social Charter.

The rate and rules of the minimum wage are of importance to young people in light of the fact that a 2015 NERI report found that almost **4 in 10 young people or 39.1% of young people aged 18-29 years in the labour force were being paid a rate on or below the minimum wage**²⁶. A recent study by the ESRI for the Low Pay Commission²⁷ estimated that 0.5% of all employees were on a rate lower than the minimum wage based on 2009 data. These figures were largely reflected in a more recent report by the CSO which found on average 0.6% or 10,100 people were on a rate lower than the minimum wage in the period from Quarter 2 to Quarter 4 2016²⁸. This is not an insignificant number and Government must take action to protect young workers from exploitation and ensure work pays.



²⁶ Collins, M.L. (2015), 'A Profile of Those on the Minimum Wage' NERI Working Paper, 2015/ No. 27. Dublin, The Nevin Economic Research Institute.

²⁷ A study on the sub-minimum wage rates for young people", ESRI for the Low Pay Commission January 2017 <http://www.lowpaycommission.ie/publications/sub%20minima%20rates%20of%20the%20national%20minimum%20wage/a-study-of-sub-minimum-wage-rates-for-young-people.pdf>

²⁸ CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey, National Minimum Wage Estimates, April 2017, <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/q-nmw/qnhs-nationalminimumwageseriesq42016/>

TABLE 2:

Sub Minimum Rate of the Minimum Wage on or after 1 January 2017		
	MINIMUM HOURLY RATE OF PAY	% OF MINIMUM WAGE
Experienced adult worker	€9.25	100%
Aged under 18	€6.48	70%
First year from date of first employment aged over 18	€7.40	80%
Second year from date of first employment aged over 18	€8.33	90%
Employee aged over 18, in structured training during working hours		
1st one third period	€6.94	75%
2nd one third period	€7.40	80%
3rd one third period	€8.33	90%

Note: each one third period must be at least one month and no more than one year.

We welcome the Government commitment²⁹ to bring forward legislation to address precarious employment and the casualization of work, however, the preparation and enactment of such legislation will take time. In the interim, action must be taken to address discrimination and exploitation of young workers. In light of Government statements *“that work must pay”*³⁰, we believe that it would be contradictory and untenable for Government to retain provisions such as the sub-minimum rates, which means that work does not pay and instead contributes to precarious employment and social exclusion among young people.

NYCI believes that Government must take into account the view of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Social Rights which found *“that the situation in Ireland is not in conformity with Article 4 subsection 1 of the Charter on the ground that the reduced national minimum wage applicable to adult workers on their first employment or following a course of studies is not sufficient to ensure a decent standard of living”*³¹.

²⁹ “Government approves priority drafting of legislation to address problems caused by the increased casualization of work and to strengthen the regulation of precarious work” <https://www.djei.ie/en/News-And-Events/Department-News/2017/May/02052017a.html>

³⁰ Speech by the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD at the IBEC President’s Dinner, Thursday 17 September 2015, RDS Dublin 4

³¹ Activity Report 2014, European Committee of Social Rights, Council of Europe.

.....

We are also very concerned at the duration of the trainee rates which can last up to three years. While we accept that all employees should receive training, we do not accept that an employee can be paid a reduced rate on the basis they need training of up to three years. Indeed, in its submissions to the National Minimum Wage Commission in 1998, the then national employment and training agency, FAS, recommended that the trainee rate should only apply for one year³². Our proposal also includes young workers aged 16 and 17 years (in light of the fact that the State has decided that this is the age at which you have a legal right to leave formal education and seek work). Since the introduction of the minimum wage in 2000, the context has changed considerably and there have been many legislative changes and policy developments and progress, with regard to early school leaving and school completion. As a result, the second level school completion rates have increased from 83.6% for the cohort entering school in 1998 to 90.6% for the cohort entering school in 2008³³. This proposal, if implemented, would contribute to Ireland's commitment under Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

In Budget 2018, we are calling on Government to abolish the sub-minimum rates of the minimum wage.

.....

INVESTMENT:

No cost to Exchequer.

.....

RESPONSIBILITY:

Department of Enterprise and Innovation.



³² Final Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Implementation of a National Minimum Wage

³³ Retention Rates of Pupils in Second Level Schools 2008 Cohort, February 2015

Youth Homelessness

5

RECOMMENDATION: Tackling youth homelessness

RATIONALE:

In April 2017, 7,680³⁴ people were recorded as homeless, which included 4,972 adults and 2,708 children under 18 years. **The number of young people aged 18-24 who are homeless was 793 in April 2017 representing a rise of 63% in the two years since March 2015.**

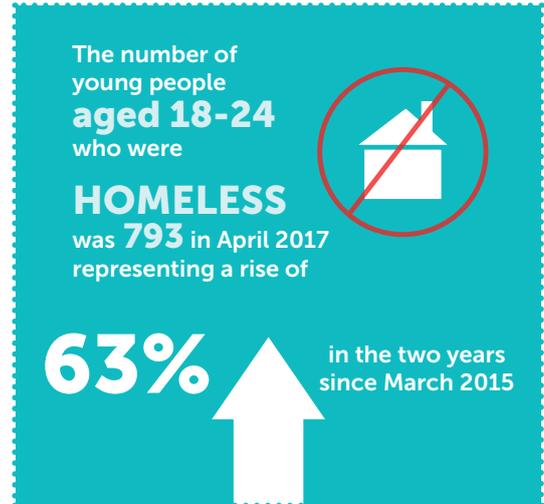
The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014–2015, Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, identifies 'economic security and opportunity' as a national outcome for children and young people up to the age of 25. Despite this, homelessness amongst young people in Ireland as outlined above is a significant and growing problem. Many have difficulty accessing affordable and quality housing in the private rental market and/or social housing sector. The current levels of youth unemployment and cuts in social welfare for young people in successive budgets have made it increasingly difficult for many to be able to afford to leave home and live independently. Likewise these cuts and lack of supply have made it very challenging for young people leaving care to access housing.

The cuts in welfare payments have particularly impacted on young people at risk of homelessness. It is welcome that Government have previously protected young people leaving care from the reduced welfare rates, we believe it is now time to protect young people experiencing homelessness and restore the full rate to this cohort in Budget 2018. These reductions in payment mean that young people who do not come from a care background and have become homeless will not be able to support themselves out of homelessness and into accommodation. In the vast majority of cases, the causes of their homelessness mean that returning to the 'family home' is not a viable option. Given the priorities in the allocation of social housing, the most likely route for a young person to secure accommodation is through rent supplement. We welcome the changes in Budget 2017, which reduced the contribution of young people under 26 (on the lowest Jobseeker Allowance rate) to rent supplement from €30 to €10³⁵, however, this still leaves young people on the lowest rate with a disposable income of just over €90 per week. As a result of this limited income it is almost impossible for young people to secure viable rental accommodation.

³⁴ The Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government Homelessness Report April 2017, <http://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/homelessness-report-april-2017>

³⁵ <http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Rent-Supplement.aspx>

While taking up an education/training course will result in a full payment being made, this cannot be used as the basis of a move to independent living as it would be impossible to sustain the accommodation after the training is completed. The result of this policy anomaly is that young people will spend much longer periods in homeless services, increasing the likelihood that they become entrenched in homelessness. This policy is not only detrimental for the young people involved; it is also costly for the state. Supporting young people in homeless accommodation is very expensive. A Mazars report³⁶ estimated that the average cost of supporting a person experiencing homelessness in 2014 was €19,179 per annum.



NYCI endorses Focus Ireland’s proposal that where a young person under 26 years has been assessed as being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, they would qualify for the full rate under the discretions allowed as part of the supplementary welfare payments procedure. Once a young person on the reduced rate has been assessed as in need of support to address homelessness, a case conference would be triggered that would include, the case/support worker, a local authority housing officer and Intreo office official, and any other appropriate services that the young person may be accessing. Once a pathway out of homelessness and support plan is agreed with the young person the local Intreo office could use the discretion available under article 38 of the supplementary welfare regulation SI 412 of 2007 to provide an increased payment to the young person in accordance with the support plan agreed with the young person. This proposal, if implemented, would contribute towards Ireland’s commitment under Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.

We estimate that the cost of implementing this new policy would be €4,695³⁷ per young person. In the unlikely event that all 793 young people who are currently homeless would move from the reduced rate to the full rate, such a proposal would cost €3.7m. This maximum cost is very unlikely, as not all young people are on the reduced rate. Some may be on the reduced rate but on the higher reduced rate of €147.80 and it is possible that some young people will not meet all the criteria for the increased payment. On that basis, NYCI estimates that 75% of the current cohort would qualify at a cost of €2.8m in 2018.

INVESTMENT:

€2.8m to tackle youth homelessness.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Department of Employment and Social Protection/Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.



³⁶ Independent Review of Homeless Services, Mazars for the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government, December 2015 http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/independent_review_of_homeless_services_-_mazars.pdf

³⁷ €90.30 per week x 52 weeks = €4,695.60

Youth Mental Health

6

RECOMMENDATION:

Invest in guidance counselling and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

RATIONALE:

Mental health continues to emerge as among one of the most important policy issues in all surveys and consultations with young people. Findings from research by the Royal College of Surgeons³⁸ demonstrate that by the age of 13 years, 1 in 3 young people in Ireland are likely to have experienced some type of mental health difficulty. By the age of 24 years, that rate had increased to over 1 in 2. While the overall number of people dying by suicide has declined, there has been an increase among young men³⁹. Of particular concern, is the fact that the suicide rate for young people aged 15-19 years is the fourth highest in the EU⁴⁰.

While excellent work has been undertaken to support young people to reach out for help when in need, much more needs to be done to assist young people and reduce the incidences of self-harm, suicidal attempts and death by suicide. The publication of 'Connecting for Life' the National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020⁴¹ is welcome. We also welcome the establishment of the National Taskforce on Youth Mental Health⁴² and the invitation to NYCI to join and contribute to the work of the Taskforce. We look forward to the implementation of its recommendations when published. We also support the introduction of the Junior Cycle Well Being Programme⁴³ commencing in secondary schools from September 2017. If properly resourced, this is an opportunity to enhance the personal, social and mental well-being of young people in the formal education system.

2,520

In February 2017,
children and young people
on a **waiting list** for



**MENTAL
HEALTH
SERVICES**

up
44%

over the same period in 2016

³⁸ The Mental Health of Young People in Ireland, RCSI, 2013

³⁹ <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/drop-in-suicide-rate-very-encouraging-says-trinity-professor-1.3082871>

⁴⁰ National Office for Suicide Prevention (2013) Annual Report, Health Service Executive.

⁴¹ Connecting for Life, Ireland's Strategy to Reduce Suicide, 2015-2020 http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Connecting-for-Life_LR.pdf

⁴² A Programme for Partnership Government", May 2016, pp67

Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 134, 31 May 2017 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-05-31a.264>

⁴³ A Programme for Partnership Government", May 2016, pp87

The evidence suggests that guidance counselling services in schools provide support to young people beyond information and advice on career planning and options. In many schools, guidance counselling services are a vital first 'port of call' for some young people with concerns and problems which may impact on their mental health. The decision of the Government to restore the guidance counselling allocation to schools in the Programme for Government⁴⁴ is welcome. To date two thirds (400 of the 600 posts) of the guidance allocation lost in 2012 will be restored by September 2017. We also welcome the commitment in the Action Plan for Education⁴⁵ to further enhance guidance at secondary level; however, this commitment should be acted on without delay. We recommend that the balance of 200 posts should be restored in Budget 2018, this increased investment will cost €12.6m⁴⁶.

In 2006, the Government published the 'A Vision for Change'⁴⁷ policy document which proposed a range of measures to enhance the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The service is delivered by 67 CAMHS teams and three paediatric teams supported by 66 operational beds nationally. In 2017, it is expected that 18,500 children and young people under 18 years will access the service⁴⁸. The recent data available indicates that the waiting list for CAMHS is growing. **In February 2017, there were 2,520 children and young people on a waiting list for mental health services, up 44% over the same period in 2016.** Over 10% of these children and young people have been waiting over 12 months for an initial appointment⁴⁹. A survey by Barnardos found that 60% had been on a waiting list for up to 12 months, with a further 26% waiting for two years for an initial assessment⁵⁰. The waiting times in some parts of the country such as in the South West (Cork/Kerry) and North West and East (Cavan, Monaghan, Leitrim, Sligo and Donegal) is particularly long. The Barnardos survey also found that the delay in accessing services was impacting negatively on the young people involved, i.e. their condition was worsening, affecting the child's mood, behaviour and well-being and affecting school attendance and performance.

While there has been increased capacity in the clinical staff in the CAMHS, it is still below what was recommended by 'A Vision for Change'. With a growing youth population, it is critical that the staff and resources are available to assist young people with mental health difficulties when they need them; otherwise the waiting lists will continue to increase. NYCI recommends an additional investment of €20m should be allocated in Budget 2018 to complete the process of bringing the staff complement in CAMHS up to that proposed in 'A Vision for Change'. Both proposals, if implemented, would contribute towards Ireland's commitment under Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

INVESTMENT:

€32.6m Enhance guidance counselling and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Department of Health/Department of Education and Skills.



⁴⁴ "A Programme for Partnership Government", May 2016, pp87

⁴⁵ Action Plan for Education, Department of Education and Skills, 2017 <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Corporate-Reports/Strategy-Statement/Action-Plan-for-Education-2017.pdf>

⁴⁶ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 219, April 11 2017 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-04-11a.498>

⁴⁷ "A Vision for Change", Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy, 2006

⁴⁸ Seanad Éireann Debate, 30 May 2017, <https://www.kildarestreet.com/sendebates/?id=2017-05-30a.15>

⁴⁹ "Waiting Lists Affect Child Development", Barnardos Ireland, May 2017 pp5 <https://www.barnardos.ie/assets/files/pdf/2017-Barnardos-Waiting-Lists-Briefing-Paper.pdf>

⁵⁰ Ibid

Cost of Third-Level Education



RECOMMENDATION:

Reduce the Student Contribution Charge by €500

RATIONALE:

We recommend that Budget 2018 reduce the financial burden of third level education on students and families. The Student Contribution Charge increased from €1,500 to €2,000 in Budget 2011 and continued to increase in increments of €250 until it reached €3,000 in 2015. A decrease in the fee level would come at a relatively low cost to the State, but would alleviate the financial pressure on students as the level of the fees has doubled over the last six years. The Student Contribution Charge is abnormally high by European standards, and second only to the United Kingdom within the EU.

The DIT Campus Life Cost of Living Guide⁵¹ estimates that the cost of living while studying at third-level is €11,000 per annum. The sum is made up of many different costs, of which the Student Contribution Charge is the second largest after rent. The only cost of attending third-level that can be directly addressed in the budget is this charge. NYCI believe that reducing the over 6,000⁵² or 15% of students who do not progress from first year to second year at third level should be a policy priority. This is not only detrimental for the students involved, but represents a cost for the state. Easing the financial burden on students and their families can aid and support retention and progression.



COST OF LIVING
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PER ANNUM



⁵¹ DIT Campus Cost of Living Guide <http://www.dit.ie/campuslife/studentssupport/costoflivingguide/>

⁵² HEA, A Study of Progression in Higher Education 2012/13 to 2013/14 http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/hea-study-of-progression-in-irish-higher-education-2013_14_to_2014_15.pdf

.....

This measure would also have positive consequences for student participation and mental health, as well as raising standards of living and reducing over-dependence on precarious part-time employment. NYCI recommends that Government reduce the Student Contribution Charge by €500 in Budget 2018, based on data from the Department of Education and Skills this would cost €34m⁵³. This proposal, if implemented, would contribute towards Ireland's commitment under Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

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INVESTMENT:

€34m to reduce the Student Contribution Charge.

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RESPONSIBILITY:

Department of Education and Skills.



⁵³ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 198, April 11 2017 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-04-11a.433>

Alcohol Related Harm

8

RECOMMENDATION:

Greater contribution to alcohol related harm by off-trade

RATIONALE:

NYCI is recommending that Government should raise the excise licence duties in the off-licence sector, as those retailers that are selling large volumes of alcohol should make a greater contribution to the costs of dealing with alcohol related harm.

The Liquor Licencing Act, 2000, dramatically changed the nature of how and where alcohol was bought and consumed in Ireland. This legislation led to a significant growth in off licences, particularly in mixed trading premises such as supermarkets, petrol stations and convenience stores. According to the Revenue Commissioners, **between 1998 and 2010 the number of pub licences issued decreased by 19%, while the number of off-licences more than doubled**⁵⁴. In 2008 the off-licence sector (off-trade) accounted for approximately 52% of sales by volume, this was the first time that the off-trade sold more alcohol by volume than the on-trade (publicans)⁵⁵. By 2012 the off-trade had increased its share and accounted for about 55% to 60% of the volume of alcohol sold⁵⁶, while only accounting for 26.3% of the spending on alcohol. This data reflects the growing dominance of the off-licence trade in alcohol sales, but also the low prices and in many cases the below cost selling in the sector, driven in particular by the large supermarkets. Despite selling higher volumes of alcohol than the on-trade, the off trade sector contributes significantly less than the on-trade in terms of the excise licence fee. In 2015, the 'on-trade' contributed €5.56m compared to €3.1m for the 'off-trade'⁵⁷. The current fee structure is outlined in Table 3⁵⁸.



Between
1998 and **2010**
NUMBER OF
PUB LICENCES
DECREASED BY

19%



WHILE THE
NUMBER OF
OFF-LICENCES
MORE THAN DOUBLED⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Steering Group Report on a National Substance Misuse Strategy, Department of Health, February 2012, http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/16908/2/Steering_Group_Report_on_a_National_Substance_Misuse_Strategy_-_7_Feb_11.pdf pp12

⁵⁵ Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the proposed regulation of the Nightclub Industry in Ireland, INIA, April 2009.

⁵⁶ Foley, A., <http://www.drinksindustry.ie/assets/Documents/The%20Economic%20Contribution%20of%20the%20Drinks%20Industry%202013x.pdf> pp10

⁵⁷ Tax Strategy Group, Department of Finance, TSG 15/05 <http://www.finance.gov.ie/sites/default/files/TSG%2015%2005%20General%20Excise%20Duties%20%28Final%29.pdf> pp15-16

⁵⁸ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question, 139, October 15 2009

TABLE 3:

Category of Licence	Level of Annual	Turnover Rates
RETAILERS' ON LICENCES:		
SPIRITS (PUBLICAN'S LICENCE)	Less than €190,500	€250
	€190,500 but less than €381,000	€505
	€381,000 but less than €635,000	€1,140
	€635,000 but less than €952,500	€1,775
	€952,500 but less than €1,270,000	€2,535
	€1,270,000 or more	€3,805
BEER		€500
WINE		€500
RETAILERS' OFF LICENCES:		
SPIRITS		€500
BEER		€500
WINE		€500

The fee structure should be changed and the off-licences should be charged the same fee for a spirit licence as the on-trade, based on turnover as outlined above. Based on information provided by the Department of Finance, 7,333 licences were issued in the off-trade in 2016. While many of these are held by small to medium retail outlets, some are held by large supermarket chains who sell considerable volumes of alcohol and these outlets should make a greater contribution to the health and justice costs which arise from the alcohol they sell and make profits from. A new graduated fee structure could be designed in such a way as not to impose any significant cost on small businesses in the off-trade, but that would ensure the large supermarket chains selling vast quantities of alcohol contribute more. NYCI believe that a fee based on turnover is a fair mechanism as smaller outlets with low turnover will not experience any increase, while the large outlets which are selling vast quantities of alcohol will be making a greater contribution to the social costs of alcohol consumption. In 2015, the Department of Finance estimated that a new fee structure for the off-trade based on turnover would generate €8m, which is €4.9m more than is currently collected in excise licences in the off-trade⁵⁹. This proposal, if implemented, would contribute towards Ireland's commitment under Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

In Budget 2018, the Government should bring the charging structure for retailers' off-licences in line with the charging structure for retailers' on-licences. At present, the retailers in off-trade pay a flat fee of €1,500, irrespective of the volume of alcohol sold whereas the on-trade pays on the basis of turnover. NYCI believe that off-licences in the major supermarkets which are selling large volumes of alcohol should make a greater contribution to the costs of dealing with alcohol related harm.

INCOME GENERATED:

€4.9m Ensure retail off-licences pay more towards cost of alcohol related harm.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Department of Finance/Department of Justice and Equality.



⁵⁹ Tax Strategy Group, Department of Finance, TSG 15/05, pp16 <http://www.finance.gov.ie/sites/default/files/TSG%2015%2005%20General%20Excise%20Duties%20%28Final%29.pdf>

Conclusion

Budget 2018 presents an opportunity for Government to invest in our growing youth population, which will increase by 11.6% between 2015 and 2025. The investment in youth work services, employment, education and social protection supports, and measures to promote positive mental health, equality and to prevent homelessness in 2018 will not just make a difference now but will generate a social and economic dividend over the coming decades. There are many good reasons to support young people to prosper and achieve their full potential; indeed there are a million⁶⁰ good reasons to do so. We call on Government to seize that opportunity in Budget 2018.

⁶⁰ Youth Population 10-24 years will be 1,005,938 by 2025, based on Census 2016 data



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