



**NYCI Pre-Budget Submission 2017**

# **“Youth Rising”**

**“Achieve Ireland’s Full Potential”**

Comhairle Náisiúnta na nÓg  
National Youth Council of Ireland

3 Montague Street  
Dublin 2

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# Summary of Recommendations

In this submission NYCI recommends to Government a number of priorities for investment in Budget 2017;

## **1. Invest in Youth Work Services**

- Increase investment in Youth Work Services in light of the growing numbers of young people and to support the implementation of the National Youth Strategy

## **2. Reduce Youth Unemployment**

- Increase the investment in the Youth Guarantee to reduce youth unemployment

## **3. Incentivise education, training and work for young jobseekers**

- Restore the adult rate of €188 to all young jobseekers under 26 years of age who are participating in education, training and work experience opportunities

## **4. Reduce Youth Homelessness**

- Increase welfare and enhance housing services to reduce youth homelessness

## **5. Enhance Youth Mental Health Supports and Services**

- Invest in Guidance Counselling and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

## Background

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for 50 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 staff<sup>1</sup>. 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

Ireland has one of the youngest populations in Europe with one-third under 25 years, with 10-24 year olds representing 18.3% of the total population of 4.59 million<sup>2</sup>. It is estimated that the number of 10-24 year olds will increase by up to 13% between 2015 and 2020. Our submission is entitled “*Youth Rising*” in light of the events of 1916. One hundred years later there is an opportunity for the Government to develop and deliver policies and actions to meet the needs of young people and support them to achieve their full potential.

NYCI welcomes the statements in the new Programme for Government<sup>3</sup> 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 education.”*

If such a statement is to be 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 its commitment.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/Economic_Benefit_Youthwork_2012.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> CSO Annual Population Estimates  
[http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Database/eirestat/Annual%20Population%20Estimates/Annual%20Population%20Estimates\\_statbank.asp?sp=Annual Population Estimates&Planguage=0](http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Database/eirestat/Annual%20Population%20Estimates/Annual%20Population%20Estimates_statbank.asp?sp=Annual%20Population%20Estimates&Planguage=0)

<sup>3</sup> “A Programme for Partnership Government”, May 2016, pp78

In October 2015 the previous Government published the first ever National Youth Strategy<sup>4</sup>. The strategy identified 51 actions to deliver on the five national agreed outcomes. The National Youth Strategy seeks to support young people to be active and healthy, to achieve their full potential in learning and development, to be safe and protected from harm, to have economic security and opportunity, and to be connected and contributing to their world. It is a universal strategy for all young people and provides for the needs of young people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, the poorest outcomes.

This submission puts forward a number of policy proposals designed to address key issues for young people and the youth work sector. The submission takes into account the commitments in the Programme for Government and the National Youth Strategy and we call on the Government to take the first step in implementing these in Budget 2017.

## **Social and Economic Context**

There are conflicting trends in economic and social life in Ireland. While there are signs and indicators of economic recovery there are also significant social problems such as unemployment, poor quality employment and homelessness. The residual impact of the many years of economic recession and austerity, especially on young people are still evident and must be addressed in this Budget. The level of youth unemployment has declined from a high of 31.6% in February 2012<sup>5</sup> to 16.9% at the end of Quarter 1 2016;<sup>6</sup> however it is still almost double the rate in 2007 prior to the crisis of 8-9%.

NYCI is also concerned with the growing precariousness of the labour market and quality of the jobs being created. 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 on the minimum wage<sup>7</sup>. We also know from the Government commissioned report on “If and when” contracts, that just over 5% of

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) National Youth Strategy 2015–2020 Dublin: Government Publications. Available at: [www.dcyia.ie](http://www.dcyia.ie)

<sup>5</sup> “JobBridge, Stepping Stone or Dead End” <http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI-JobBridge-Full-Report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Quarterly National Household Survey, Quarter 1 2016, CSO

<http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/gnhs/quarterlynationalhouseholdsurveyquarter12016/>

<sup>7</sup> Collins, M.L. (2015), ‘A Profile of Those on the Minimum Wage’ NERI Working Paper, 2015/ No. 27. Dublin, The Nevin Economic Research Institute.

employees in Ireland now have constantly variable working hours. The largest numbers work in the Retail & Wholesale, Food & Accommodation, and Health & Social Work sectors.<sup>8</sup>

## Youth Work Services

As we emerge from the economic and social crisis, one of the positive indicators is our growing youth population. It is estimated that between 2015 and 2020 the number of young people aged 10-24 will grow by up to 13%.<sup>9</sup> 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. As detailed in the Indecon Report<sup>10</sup> 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 provides support to the 40,000 volunteers who work with young people.

The current expenditure for youth work services from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs fell by over 31% between 2008 and 2015. The decision of the outgoing Government to provide a small increase of 2% in 2016 was welcome, bringing the total current allocation to €51m. 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 new Government invests significantly in young people and youth work.

We welcome the commitment in the Programme for Government<sup>11</sup> 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”*.

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<sup>8</sup> Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick (2015), *A Study on the Prevalence of Zero Hours Contracts among Irish Employers and their Impact on Employees*.

<sup>9</sup> Population Estimates, CSO,

<http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=PEA11&PLanguage=0>

<sup>10</sup> Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work by Indecon Economic Consultants, November 2012

<sup>11</sup> “A Programme for Partnership Government”, May 2016, pp79

In 2008, the spending on youth work services was €76 per young person; by 2014 this had fallen to €58 per young person. Based on estimates of the youth population in 2020 we propose a €15 increase to €73 per young person in current expenditure by the end of this period. This would bring investment in youth services up to €73.1m by 2020 which we believe is a modest increase in light of the increased youth population, additional commitments and regulatory requirements and inflation over the next five years. As a first step we are calling on the Government to increase investment in the youth work sector by €5.1m in Budget 2017.

## **Youth Unemployment**

We welcome the fact that there is job growth in the Irish economy and youth unemployment has decreased to 16.9% by the end of Quarter 1 in May 2016.<sup>12</sup> The rate of youth unemployment is still almost double the rate it was in 2007 before the economic crisis. We are also concerned at the 16,082 young people<sup>13</sup> 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 guarantee any young person an education, training and/or work experience place if they were unemployed for four months or more. We broadly welcomed the Irish plan for the Youth Guarantee<sup>14</sup> when it was published in January 2014. As we outlined to both the Oireachtas and the European Court of Auditors<sup>15</sup> we are concerned at the overall slow pace of implementation two and a half years into the process. The Youth Guarantee scheme in Ireland needs a review and reboot to meet the targets and to support young people into education, training and work experience and prevent the drift into long-term joblessness.

Arising from the decisions of the last two administrations the welfare rates for young people under 26 years on Jobseekers Allowance has been drastically reduced. The most recent data indicates that 66% or 23,234 of the 35,124 young people in receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance in April 2016 were on €100 a week, 13% or 4,623 were on €144 with just over 20% or 7,155 are on the full rate of €188 per week.<sup>16</sup> In 2014, NYCI published the results of a poll which found that 4

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<sup>12</sup> Quarterly National Household Survey, Quarter 1 2016, CSO

<http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/qnhs/quarterlynationalhouseholdsurveyquarter12016/>

<sup>13</sup> Dáil Question 494, May 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-05-31a.1301>

<sup>14</sup> Implementation Plan of the EU Council Recommendation on the Youth Guarantee

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guarantee-implementation-plan.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> NYCI Presentation to the European Court of Auditors, February 11<sup>th</sup> 2016

<sup>16</sup> Dáil Question 492, May 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-05-31a.1295>

out of 10 young people on Jobseekers' Allowance were struggling to make ends meet.<sup>17</sup> This is not surprising as the Vincentian Partnership found that the cost of a single adult living as part of a household was €184<sup>18</sup> in 2014 and this does not take into account the financial burden on young people who are not living with parents or family. There is also increasing anecdotal evidence that the cuts are leading to homelessness among young people. We are calling on the incoming Government to begin the process of reversing these cuts in Budget 2017. As a first step we are proposing that all young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and those on education, training and work experience programmes currently on reduced rates should have their payments set at the minimum adult rate of €188 per week.

## Youth Homelessness

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 is a significant and growing problem. Many young people experience extreme difficulty accessing affordable and quality housing in the private rental market and/or social housing sector and as a result they become homeless. The current high rates of youth unemployment and cuts in social welfare for young people in successive budgets has made it increasingly difficult for young people to afford to leave home and live independently. Furthermore, there are a myriad of issues that a young person can experience in their young lives that can lead them into homelessness, for example, family relationship breakdown, mental health problems, child abuse, substance misuse, etc.

In March 2016, 5,963 people were recorded as homeless, which included 3,969 adults and 1,994 children under 18 years. The number of young people aged 18-24 who are homeless was 642 in March 2016 representing a rise of 32% on the previous figure in March 2015.

The recent increase in rental supports is welcome, however young people must also be assisted to secure and retain long-term accommodation through the reversal of welfare cuts. Also young people must be able to access the support services they need when facing homelessness.

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<sup>17</sup> NYCI Briefing Paper on Jobseekers' Allowance

[http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI%20Briefing%20Paper\\_RedC\\_Jobseekers%27%20Allowance\\_Final.pdf](http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI%20Briefing%20Paper_RedC_Jobseekers%27%20Allowance_Final.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B-cR3V9wzdJJSnpcVVRsSTVBeXc/edit?usp=sharing&pli=1>

## Mental Health

Mental health continues to emerge as among one of the most important policy issues in all surveys and consultations with young people. NYCI supports the provision of both universal and targeted measures to promote positive mental health among young people alongside the provision of services for young people with mental health difficulties. NYCI through the National Youth Health Programme delivers the ASIST programme which trains those working with young people to become more ready, willing and able to help those at risk of suicide.

Findings from research by the Royal College of Surgeons<sup>19</sup> 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. Of particular concern is the fact that the suicide rate for young people aged 15-19 years is the fourth highest in the EU<sup>20</sup>. Excellent work has been undertaken by a range of organisations to address the stigma surrounding mental health difficulties and to support young people to reach out for help when in need. Much more work of this nature is required to support young people and reduce the incidences of self-harm, suicidal attempts and death by suicide.

The publication last year of “Connecting for Life”, the National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020<sup>21</sup> is welcome, as is the proposal in the Programme for Government to establish a Taskforce on Youth Mental Health<sup>22</sup>. While these commitments are positive, more outcomes and impact are required. In recent years supports such as guidance counselling in second level schools have been curtailed. Guidance counsellors often provide assistance beyond that related to career matters. We welcome the commitment of Government to reverse these cuts. As noted by Mental Health Reform<sup>23</sup> there are long waiting lists for child and adolescent mental health services. It is vital that the incoming Government provide funding in Budget 2017 to deliver on these commitments.

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<sup>19</sup> The Mental Health of Young People in Ireland, RCSI, 2013

[http://www.rcsi.ie/files/psychiatry/20131009042046\\_PERL%20ResearchReport\\_041013\\_PRI.pdf](http://www.rcsi.ie/files/psychiatry/20131009042046_PERL%20ResearchReport_041013_PRI.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> National Office for Suicide Prevention (2013) Annual Report. Health Service Executive. Available at:

[http://www.nosp.ie/annual\\_report\\_2013.pdf](http://www.nosp.ie/annual_report_2013.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Connecting for Life, Ireland’s Strategy to Reduce Suicide, 2015-2020 [http://health.gov.ie/wp-](http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Connecting-for-Life_LR.pdf)

[content/uploads/2015/06/Connecting-for-Life\\_LR.pdf](http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Connecting-for-Life_LR.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> “A Programme for Partnership Government”, May 2016, pp67

<sup>23</sup> “6 Key Actions for the Next Government”-Mental Health Reform

<b>Subject</b>	<b>1. YOUTH WORK FUNDING</b>
<b>Proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase investment in Youth Work Services by 10% to €56.1m</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>We welcome the commitment in the Programme for Government<sup>24</sup> to “fund an expansion of Youth Services”. This makes sense given that Ireland almost uniquely in Western Europe has a large and growing youth population. Between 2015 and 2020, the number of young people will grow by an estimated 13%. This will also create challenges but 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.</p> <p>The Indecon Report<sup>25</sup> found that 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 to the state in relation to the cost of providing health, justice and welfare services for young people. The funding provided also provides support to the 40,000 volunteers who work with young people.</p> <p>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, Garda diversion and to prevent substance misuse. 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 club.<sup>26</sup></p> <p>The current expenditure for youth work services from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs fell by over 31% between 2008 and 2015. Whereas in 2008 we were spending €76 on youth work per young person; by 2014 this had fallen to €58 per young person. The decision of the previous Government to provide a small increase of 2% in 2016 was welcome, bringing the total current allocation to €51m. 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 new Government invests significantly in young people and youth work. Based on estimates of the youth population in 2020 we would propose a €15 increase to €73 per young person in current expenditure over the next four budgets. As a first steps towards that target we are proposing a 10% increase in 2017.</p>
<b>Cost</b>	<b>€5.1m</b>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Department of Children and Youth Affairs</b>

<sup>24</sup> “A Programme for Partnership Government”, May 2016, pp79

<sup>25</sup> Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work by Indecon Economic Consultants, November 2012

<sup>26</sup> (European Commission 2011, “Youth on the Move” - Analytical Report of Flash Eurobarometer Number 319a).

<b>Subject</b>	<b>2. YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT</b>	
<b>Proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the investment in the Youth Guarantee to reduce youth unemployment</li> </ul>	
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>We welcome the job growth in the Irish economy and the decline in youth unemployment to 16.9% by the end of Quarter 1, May 2016<sup>27</sup>; however this is still almost double the pre-economic crisis rate. We are also concerned that there are 16,082 young people<sup>28</sup> who are on the live register for 12 months or more. This is worrying in light of the commitment in the EU Youth Guarantee to guarantee any young person an education, training and/or work experience place if they were unemployed for four months or more.</p> <p>NYCI was among the first organisations to call for the introduction of a Youth Guarantee. We broadly welcomed the Irish plan for the Youth Guarantee<sup>29</sup> when it was published in 2014. However as we have outlined to the Oireachtas and the European Court of Auditors<sup>30</sup> we are concerned at the overall slow pace of implementation over two years into the process.</p> <p>The Youth Guarantee scheme in Ireland needs a review and reboot to meet the targets and to support young people into education, training and work experience. We are of the view that the current levels of youth unemployment would be lower if the youth guarantee was rolled out as promised. For example, the implementation of the Ballymun Youth Guarantee pilot<sup>31</sup> led to a 29% reduction in numbers of young people on the live register compared to an 18.9% decrease nationally between December 2013 and December 2014. With proper implementation we could aim to bring youth unemployment to 8-9% by the end of 2017.</p> <p>The Irish implementation plan anticipated the delivery of 28,350 places in 2014, with a similar number subsequently committed to for 2015. In 2014, only 23,313<sup>32</sup> places were delivered and in 2015 (based on provisional figures) only 19,171<sup>33</sup> were provided. Data on the expenditure on the Youth Guarantee in 2014 and 2015 is still unavailable<sup>34</sup>. It is clear we need to invest more to ensure all young people on the live register for 6 months or more are offered a good quality education, training and/or work experience placement. We estimate based on the figures provided in the National Implementation Plan and taking into account the co-funding available from the EU that an additional €30m would be required.</p>	
<b>Cost</b>	<b>Increased investment in the Youth Guarantee</b>	<b>€30m</b>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Department of Social Protection/Department of Education and Skills</b>	

<sup>27</sup> Quarterly National Household Survey, Quarter 1 2016, CSO

<http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/qnhs/quarterlynationalhouseholdsurveyquarter12016/>

<sup>28</sup> Dáil Question 494, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-05-31a.1301>

<sup>29</sup> Implementation Plan of the EU Council Recommendation on the Youth Guarantee

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guarantee-implementation-plan.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> NYCI Presentation to the European Court of Auditors, February 11<sup>th</sup> 2016

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Key-Learning-Ballymun-Youth-Guarantee-Project.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Dáil Question 68 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>33</sup> Dáil Question 89 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016

<sup>34</sup> Dáil Question 498, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-05-31a.1313&s=%22youth+guarantee%22>

<b>Subject</b>	<b>3. INCENTIVISE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE</b>	
<b>Proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore the adult rate of €188 to all young jobseekers under 26 years who are participating in education, training and work experience programmes</li> </ul>	
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>NYCI supports full equality for young people. We opposed the decision of previous Governments to reduce welfare payments to young people under 26 years of age and we want the full rates restored. Likewise we call on Government to reduce pay discrimination in the public sector to make sure that young workers get equal pay for equal work.</p> <p>The most recent data indicates that 66% or 23,234 of the 35,124 young people in receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance (JA) in April 2016 were on €100 a week, 13% or 4,623 were on €144 with just over 20% or 7,155 on the full rate of €188 per week.<sup>35</sup> 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 meet<sup>36</sup>. This is not surprising as the Vincentian Partnership found that the cost of a single adult living as part of a household was €184<sup>37</sup> in 2014 and this does not take into account the financial burden on young people who are not living with parents or family.</p> <p>The cuts in welfare were partly justified on the basis that it would incentivise young people to take up the additional education, training and/or work experience opportunities. This policy is undermined by decisions to cut various activation payments and training allowances to young people under 26 years. The training allowance for young people participating on VTOS, Youthreach, Community Training Centre Programmes and other SOLAS training has been reduced from €188 per week to €160 per week. From January 2014, the payment to those participating on the Back to Education Allowance Programme has been cut to €160 per week and for JobBridge interns who were on €100 prior to participation they receive €152.50 per week while working between 35-40 hours a week.</p> <p>We are calling on the Government to begin the process of reversing these cuts in Budget 2017. As a first step we are proposing that all young people on education, training and work experience programmes currently on reduced rates should have their payments set at the minimum adult rate of €188 per week. This would serve two purposes - it would reduce the rates of poverty, and it would also provide an additional financial incentive for young people to participate in education, training and work experience opportunities.</p> <p><i>(We cannot fully cost this proposal as all the data on the number of young people on different rates operated by several agencies is not available. We estimate based on the cost for BTEA (which is €6.6m<sup>38</sup>) that the overall cost would be in the region of €19m)</i></p>	
<b>Cost</b>	<b>Estimated cost</b>	<b>€19m</b>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Department of Social Protection/Department of Education and Skills.</b>	

<sup>35</sup> Dáil Question 492, May 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-05-31a.1295>

<sup>36</sup> NYCI Briefing Paper on Jobseekers' Allowance

[http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI%20Briefing%20Paper\\_RedC\\_Jobseekers%27%20Allowance\\_Final.pdf](http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI%20Briefing%20Paper_RedC_Jobseekers%27%20Allowance_Final.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B-cR3V9wzdJJSnpCVVRsSTVBeXc/edit?usp=sharing&pli=1>

<sup>38</sup> Dáil Question 210 May 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 [https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2015-05-](https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2015-05-26a.280&s=%22BTEA%22+section%3Awrans#g282.r)

[26a.280&s=%22BTEA%22+section%3Awrans#g282.r](https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2015-05-26a.280&s=%22BTEA%22+section%3Awrans#g282.r)

<b>Subject</b>	<b>4. REDUCE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS</b>
<b>Proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase welfare and access to housing services to reduce homelessness</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>In March 2016, 5,963 people were recorded as homeless, which included 3,969 adults and 1,994 children under 18 years. The number of young people aged 18-24 who are homeless was 642 in March 2016 representing a rise of 32% on the previous figure in March 2015.</p> <p>The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2015, <i>Better Outcomes Brighter Futures</i>, 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.</p> <p>It is important that the upcoming budget and proposed “<i>Action Plan on Housing</i>” include measures to address youth homelessness. Obviously the best long-term solution is an increase in supply but in the short-term Government must invest in services and support to prevent youth homelessness and assist young people to get a roof over their head. We propose three measures to alleviate the current crisis in youth homelessness. We welcome the recent announcement by Government to increase the rent limits for both the Rent Supplement and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) in line with the commitments in the Programme for Government<sup>39</sup> from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. This decision will assist young people to retain their current accommodation, but on its own will not be enough. We also propose that any young person under 26 years who is homeless and on the reduced Jobseeker’s Allowance welfare payment should have their payment restored to the full rate. This would assist this cohort to find and secure housing and prevent homelessness.</p> <p>There must also be increased investment in support services that young people vulnerable to becoming homelessness require, such as mental health, addiction, and employment services. The emergency out of hour’s social work service should be expanded to be more widely available. Further investment must also be made into services which assist young people to sustain their accommodation and remain out of homelessness. Investment in such services is a crucial preventative measure to ensure young people remain in secure accommodation. We estimate that the total cost of these measures will be in the region of €20m.</p>
<b>Cost</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>€20m</b></span>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government/Department of Social Protection</b>

<sup>39</sup> “A Programme for Partnership Government”, May 2016, pp21

<b>Subject</b>	<b>5. ENHANCE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS AND SERVICES</b>	
<b>Proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invest in Guidance and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</li> </ul>	
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>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 Surgeons<sup>40</sup> 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. Of particular concern is the fact that the suicide rate for young people aged 15-19 years is the fourth highest in the EU<sup>41</sup>.</p> <p>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 <i>“Connecting for Life”</i>, the National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020<sup>42</sup> is welcome, as is the proposal in the Programme for Government to establish a Taskforce on Youth Mental Health<sup>43</sup>. It is vital these commitments result in tangible supports for young people.</p> <p>THE evidence suggests that guidance counselling services in schools provide support to young people beyond issues concerning career options. In many schools they are a vital first “port of call” for many young people with issues and problems which may impact on mental health. The decision of the incoming administration to restore the guidance counselling allocation to schools in the Programme for Government<sup>44</sup> is welcome. This increased investment will cost €19m and should be implemented in Budget 2017<sup>45</sup>.</p> <p>In 2006 the then Government published the <i>“A Vision for Change”</i><sup>46</sup> (AVFC) policy document which proposed a range of measures to enhance the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Ten years later, as noted by Mental Health Reform<sup>47</sup> there are still long waiting lists for CAMHS. As of August 2015, 2240 children and adolescents were waiting to be seen by CAMHS, with 241 of these waiting to be seen for more than 12 months. While there has been an increase in clinical staff in the CAMHS, it is still just 50% of what was recommended by AVFC. Therefore an additional investment of €30m should be allocated in Budget 2017 to bring the staffing complement up to that proposed in AVFC.</p>	
<b>Cost</b>	<b>Guidance Counselling (€19m) and Enhanced CAMHS (€30m)</b>	<b>€50m</b>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Department of the Health/Department of Education and Skills</b>	

<sup>40</sup> The Mental Health of Young People in Ireland, RCSI, 2013

<sup>41</sup> National Office for Suicide Prevention (2013) Annual Report, Health Service Executive.

<sup>42</sup> 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](http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Connecting-for-Life_LR.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> “A Programme for Partnership Government”, May 2016, pp67

<sup>44</sup> “A Programme for Partnership Government”, May 2016, pp87

<sup>45</sup> Dáil Question 330, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016

<sup>46</sup> “A Vision for Change”, Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy, 2006

<sup>47</sup> “6 Key Actions for the Next Government”-Mental Health Reform